



A Wheel of Fortune.

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V.

SYLVIA GOES TO MEET THE RIVAL HEIR,
AND MEETS WITH HEARTY SUP-
PORT FROM MR. HALSTEAD.

THE following day word came from Mr. Marchant that the interview with Mr. Denmead was to be postponed until the following week. He set the day, and a request that the meeting should take place at his home, Elmwood.

Sylvia's old life of drudgery seemed to have recommenced, save that Mr. Maythorne treated her with deference, and Mrs. Maythorne preserved a sullen silence.

Sylvia strove to hear from Greytower every day, by going to the lodge at the end of the Park. Here in an honored old age dwelt Diadema Hall, late housekeeper at Greytower. She received Sylvia kindly, but showed such a desire to be rid of her presence, when she saw Robert coming through the park, that Sylvia, now morbidly sensitive, felt she was in Mrs. Myddleton's confidence, and that she would never be forgiven for her escape with the Myddleton heir. Sylvia blushed deeply when Diadema said:

"The boy has been sorely punished for his folly, yet, as Solomon sayeth, 'Open rebuke is better than secret love.' And it would be well to remember in youthful days that 'he whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit.'"

Sylvia returned from these visits very sore at heart. Faith was only a little better, or worse, and there was little encouragement to hope for. She wondered why Robert stayed away from her. She felt his defection keenly.

But Poor Robert was undergoing the torture of self-reproach and the fulfilment of a promise made his father.

He had made his confession, and to his surprise found his father had no reproach for him. He did not look at his son during the recital. When Robert had quite finished he said, coldly:

"I have heard you with patience. I only exact one condition from you. You return to college next week. You will not again see this Wendell girl, or Miss Carstone."

"I cannot promise that, father."

"You will accept my conditions or you are no son of mine henceforth. It is no time for resistance on your part. Only the humblest conduct can exonerate you now, in the course you have pursued. I thought a young girl beneath my roof sacred, at least, from such sentimental folly as has been perpetrated by my own son. You know my terms, Robert. Abide by them."

"Father, I *cannot*! I love Faith. It is no foolish, boyish nonsense. I've done wrong, I know, to speak to her—but you wrong *me*, if you fancy I—"

"Robert, you are going to forget yourself. Believe me I am sorry for you. I am also grieved, disappointed, *ashamed* of you. If you wish to retain any portion of my love and respect, you will regard my wishes."

Robert bowed, and left the room, and Mr. Myddleton leaning back in his chair with a half sigh, and a smile, murmured:

"Poor lad! but he will recover. I went through it myself once." But Guy Myddleton had failed in fathoming his son's character. His love for Faith Carstone had in it neither vanity nor pride, and remorse was every hour riveting the fetters of his love.

So Robert struggled to obey his father, and Sylvia watched and wondered at his failing to come to her. Mr. Bowman came, however, and whiled away an evening very pleasantly. He came to remind her of the hour of the meeting, and the day, he said. He made a long stride up Friendship's Lane and departed well satisfied.

Sylvia was surprised by a call from Mr. Marchant the next day, manifestly on the same errand. She quietly said Mr. Bowman had told her of the hour, when Mr. Marchant looked vexed. But he sat

and talked some time, touched by her sad eyes, and gentle dignity, and at a loss to comprehend her determination to have the estate intact. She was so utterly free of the coquetry he had expected to see, and was so refined in her attractive beauty, that he was puzzled at her temerity in holding to this purpose.

"I have need for all this money," she said once. "I wish to repair a great wrong."

He looked at her in amazement.

"You!" he said, incredulously.

"Yes," she said, flushing painfully; "*now*, do you understand me?"

"I wish I did," he returned.

He mused on his way home on the peculiar grace of frankness in Sylvia's manner. It was not a usual feminine quality. It made a man feel a thrill of good fellowship for her at once, and a desire to place implicit faith in her truth.

Louis Marchant knew that with his own wife it was as natural with her to coquette as to breathe. Eight years of wedded life had not been entirely a bed of roses, and he had been quick to see, with many others, that Faith Carstone was not without this feminine prerogative. He had seen how things were going for Robert Myddleton, long before the fond mother suspected how attractive the little governess had proved. But this Miss Wendell was a relative.

The following day Sylvia clad herself for the ordeal of meeting Mr. Denmead, in much trepidation. At the last moment Serepta Ann Carson had been forced to decline going with her. Her school duties interfered with her friendship very often, and this slavery Sylvia wished to abolish.

Sylvia felt, at this moment of all others, she should have a female friend with her. Her heart sank, as she thought of what Mrs. Marchant and Mrs. Myddleton would say to her meeting this emergency alone. They already thought her bold and coarse. She feared her visits to the lodge had been misinterpreted. She felt Robert's mother and Diadema thought she cared too much for Robert. And truly she did love him, with the truest friendship ever bestowed; for he had been too kind to her in her loneliness not to have won her generous affection. But Sylvia

knew it was not the regard of a lover she sought in him. Yet Sylvia had lived among the conventionalities of life, and she knew her conduct the day of the Fair laid her open to stern criticism.

She started on her way to Elmwood then, alone, slowly, and much downcast. Peter, ever faithful, strove to follow her, and she was forced to the stern measure of a stone to drive him back. Poor Peter stood gazing after her with tears in his eyes, and Sylvia felt heart stricken. She had been forced to refuse her only friend.

When a goodly distance on the way, a crackling in the hedge roused her from painful thoughts, and there stood Peter again, abashed, with drooping tail, but pleading eyes.

"Well, Peter," said Sylvia, patting his ugly head. "You *shall* go. You are faithful, at any rate, and—a gentleman."

But she had only proceeded a short distance under this escort, when someone hailed her with hearty gusto. She glanced up, and coming toward her was Perry Halsted, smiling cheerfully and resplendent in a toilette that would have astounded a more prosaic mind than hers.

A pair of light trousers encased his legs, and a blue coat and flowered vest adorned his upper person. A bunch of large seals dangled from his watch chain, and his tall silk hat, dating at least nine years back, was placed jauntily on his grey head. He wore white cotton gloves a size too small, and although the sun shone brightly, carried a green cotton umbrella. He beamed upon Sylvia with complacent satisfaction.

"I'm goin' with you, my dear. Serepta said she couldn't go, and I be'ant a goin' to let you strive alone with men and fortun'. It ain't proper for so young a gal, so I'm goin' with you!"

VI.

SYLVIA DEMANDS, DENMEAD REPUDIATES
AND MR. MARCHANT UPHOLDS,
FORTUNE.

If Sylvia hesitated a moment, appalled at the splendor of Mr. Halsted's toilette, she swiftly overcome her surprise and inclination to both laugh and cry. She took that quick step from the ridiculous to the sublime. She put her arms about the old man's neck, and feeling only the kindness

that prompted him to support and comfort her, she astonished him by a kiss pressed on his withered cheek.

"O! steady now, steady," said Perry, winking away a tear drop, for his stiff New England training had never prepared him for demonstration. "I'm right glad you are willin' I should 'scort you, for Serepty kind of discouraged me. Of course I ain't much to go on, for it ain't as if I'd kept up with the styles; but these togs, are not so bad, be they?"

And he rattled his seals, importantly.

"You are very smart, indeed, Uncle Perry," said Sylvia, smiling, while her lip quivered, for she was more touched by this friendly overture, than by any anxiety or trouble she had borne. She would not have disturbed his complacency for the world. The light touch of absurdity was blotted out by the loving good will.

"You see Sylvia, Eldridge was a friend of mine. We played marbles together when he was so high. My father's old bull hooked him over the fence into the frog pond once, and my! wasn't he a sight! But Steve, he had a rich father, and he went away and made a heap more. And then he married Rosy Denmead, and took to rovin' furrin lands. But the very last time he was home, nigh onto fifteen years ago, we chawed flag-root together sittin' on my stoop. He wasn't proud no more 'an you are, Sylvia. Money didn't puff him up, but his wife was sorter proud. It's her nephew as wants to divide with you, ain't it, Sylvia?"

"I suppose it must be. His name is Denmead. If I were a man I'd *make* a fortune for myself."

"But you're not a man, my dear," said Perry, "and some times the best of us is poor sticks. Not but you'd make a good man, Sylvia, because you've plenty of back-bone. I should like to see the young man, though. He's been at Greytower fur some days, and some of the women says he's handsome. Women is so took with a man's looks! And he was dreadfully cut about Miss Carstone's accident."

Sylvia winced, and dropped the subject, but she wondered if this youth was also in love with Faith Carstone. She never for a moment associated the identity of Denmead, "and Faith's sprig of a

brother," as Robert had called him. In after days she wondered at her own stupidity. Now her thoughts were filled by the stooping middle-aged figure she had conjured up as the rival heir.

"Here comes your divinity, Ted," said Mrs. Marchant, as she caught sight of Sylvia, Uncle Perry, and Peter approaching the house. "As Louis is not here, we may agree she is rather captivating. She seems to have brought Uncle Sam along."

"Thought she had no relatives," growled Bowman. "Where *do* you suppose she picked up that old duffer? But, Kate—isn't her coloring perfect?"

"If *she* is a dairy maid,

'Good sooth she is

The queen of curds of cream.'

Oh, Ted? But do not be foolish about her, for Louis will not like it."

"Should *you* care, Kate?" with an eagerness that receives its prompt reward.

"I? Why should *I* care? Cousin Teddy, I am positively rusty when it comes to flirting, and then the baby always cries at the most interesting point. I must go now and see these people a moment. Take good care of your heart, Ted, or what is left of it."

And she left the room laughing. Sylvia was in a painful tremor of nervousness, as, after a few kind words from Mrs. Marchant, Mr. Marchant ushered her into the library.

A tall, powerfully built man was standing at the window, and he turned and advanced as Mr. Marchant said:

"Mr. Denmead, let me present to you Miss Wendell."

Sylvia raised her eyes slowly and saw her hero of the torn sleeve. As their glances met his was full of surprise; hers of confusion. The recognition was unmistakable. Bowman observed it with chagrin. Mr. Marchant sought with quick tact to make use of it.

"I see that you have met before. Let us argue from this that our interview may end favorably."

But even ready tact will not conquer a situation when the perversity of women is in the case. Denmead's glance aroused in Sylvia rebellious thoughts. She saw in his surprise reproach and disapprobation, and all the bitter criticism she had

attributed in the soreness of her heart, to Mrs. Myddleton.

A longing to crush and hurt Denmead and turn his surprise to mortification, making him suffer as she had suffered, took possession of her. Instinct gave her the weapon.

"I have never met Mr. Denmead before," she said with cold emphasis.

Denmead flushed to his hair and bowed an assent, and Bowman, devoured with jealous curiosity, had no doubt that Sylvia was hiding behind the letter of her words.

"I am sorry to have misunderstood what seemed a recognition," said Mr. Marchant in rather an annoyed tone.

Mr. Halstead was then introduced by Sylvia as an old friend of Stephen Eldridge, and the old gentleman shook hands cordially with all present, and then sat down on the edge of a chair, looking very uncomfortable and jingling his seals occasionally as if to keep up his courage.

"Peter," with that innate respect that had made Sylvia dub him a "gentleman," had stopped on the lawn where he received the attentions of a small pug and huge mastiff with equal indifference.

Mr. Marchant then stated in clear terms the case of inheritance as it stood. He concluded by saying: "I need not say it is sad to me to have to thus settle the affairs of Stephen Eldridge. We have only met once or twice in all the time I have looked after the estate; during my consulate in Berlin he was there with his wife. It remains with you to decide whether the estate shall be divided or remain intact, one of you relinquishing all claims. I cannot believe this last to be the desire of either of you, for it involves a selfish interest incompatible with my knowledge of Mr. Denmead, and I hope out of question with Miss Wendell.

After a moment's silence Sylvia spoke, coldly. She was really crushing down her nervous tremors with a firm hand, but no one would have suspected the riot beneath the calm face, with its slight touch of scorn and anxiety.

"I understood, Mr. Marchant, that this was a matter quite beyond our jurisdiction—I think that is the law term? That the court would decide this question of the inheritance."

Mr. Halstead's seals clattered cheerfully.

"Don't you give up, Sylvie; hang to the fortune," he said in a stage whisper; then subsided, checked by her annoyed glance.

"The court need not interfere with this question, Miss Wendell, if you and Mr. Denmead agree to a partition of the estate. It is with this hope, we meet to-day."

"I am sorry to disappoint you," said Sylvia turning her face toward Denmead, but not looking at him, "but it is a question I refuse to decide myself."

"Then I understand," said Denmead, stepping toward her and resting his quiet eyes upon her face, "that you come here to-day to assert your claim to the whole estate?"

"I certainly do not think either of us so free of selfish motives as to be competent to decide such a question between us. One or the other of us is Mr. Eldridge's heir. If I am his heir, I certainly have no desire to divide my cousin's estate. I may be judged selfish and grasping, but I am prepared to be no more than human at any time."

Sylvia spoke with a little slow, languid air, that was only a cloak for the embarrassment she felt under that steady gaze. It sounded so coldly unlike Sylvia, that Uncle Perry said:

"Steady—steady—now," and involuntarily his hand sought his pocket for his jack knife.

"Let me set Miss Wendell's fears at rest," said Denmead with quiet dignity. "I shall *not* claim any share in this estate. I only came to learn her views, and had I known when I came here that you had no desire for a compromise, we should have been spared this interview. While I feel there is an injustice in your claim, since you are no more nearly related to Mr. Eldridge than I am, still I am resolved *never* to go to law regarding the inheritance. I congratulate you on acquiring the fortune."

Despite his calmness, his lips were white and twitched nervously as he concluded. Sylvia listened in surprise, while Marchant exclaimed:

"Nonsense, Denmead, this is folly. It cannot proceed. In case you come to no

agreement, the matter must be brought before the courts."

Sylvia spoke, then, with an indignant glance:

"Mr. Denmead, you misunderstand me, if you think I will submit to this in silence. I do not *ask* you to yield *your* claim to me. I demand that the courts shall decide the matter, and justice lift the decision from us both."

"And I shall not go into any court of so-called justice in this land," replied the young man, gently. "I am sorry to deny you the cloak of justice for what in my eyes must seem the sin of avarice. But I do not wish to reproach you. If Mr. Marchant will permit me, I will withdraw."

"Denmead, I beg you to remain. There must be an amicable result in all this —"

"That is *now* impossible," said Sylvia; "there is no common ground remaining upon which Mr. Denmead and I can meet amicably. He has already found me lacking in gratitude, and to that he adds the charge of avarice. I think we may part now, without further parley."

"Miss Wendell," cried Denmead, "I beg your pardon. I believe I forgot myself just now. Forgive, if you can, those miserable hasty words, wrung from me in the first pain of disappointment. I fancied this fortune might be arranged between us. I was surprised into momentary anger. It is past. I cheerfully relinquish my claim. If I give one sigh to a vanished hope, believe me it is for the interests of another and not my own."

"You need not apologize, Mr. Denmead. I think I understand your motive. I hope we shall not meet again, and hardly think Mr. Marchant will even deem it necessary."

Denmead bowed and stepped back, biting his lip; but Uncle Perry sprang up restlessly.

"Come," said he, "Mr. Marchant, I ain't no lawyer, but I could a settled it better myself than this. "Both of 'em's right. Of course, the court has got to put 'em straight, and Sylvie, it ain't no good your sassin' the young man and making him look like *that*. Why ef he ain't the very fellar that saved you an arm at the fair, I'll be booted! Give

me your hand, sir, let's shake agen. And now, Sylvie, you thank him, my dear, thank him!"

The old man's hearty good will and the determined way in which he drew Sylvia's hand toward Denmead's, left them no alternative. For a moment Sylvia's little slender hand laid in Denmead's large strong grasp, and as their eyes met, amusement and annoyance struggling in his glance, Sylvia unveiled those sweet mysterious eyes of her's for his gaze a moment, and said in her natural tones:

"Believe me, I *do* thank you."

But Mr. Marchant was not granted the satisfaction of this one moment of freedom during this uncomfortable, constrained interview, for Uncle Percy had seized upon him and he was forced to listen to a tirade anything but complimentary to lawyers.

And Sylvia left the house feeling that Mr. Marchant was thoroughly vexed with both herself and Denmead, and sorry to lose his championship at a moment when she felt a mistrust in herself. For the quick, warm clasp of that large hand had made her suddenly conscious of her own smallness during the last scene.

Or was Uncle Perry cheerful as he parted with her.

"It's them lawyers, as spiled things, Sylvie," he said, watching her downcast face; "they make trouble just to patch it up. Marchant could have just chosen you heir. You're next in kin anyway. But Mr. Denmead's a likely young man. Serepty wasn't fur wrong when she said he was good lookin'."

"Don't speak of him," cried Sylvia shortly, worn out after her hard day, and the light in which she had stood. "I—I think I *hate* him."

Which so disconcerted Mr. Halstead that he walked away whistling "Bonnie Doon," dismally.

Sylvia sped to the house, Peter slowly following, where to her disgust, were gathered Mrs. Maythorne's favorite cronies. She waited wearily upon the table scarcely hearing what was said, until she heard Miss Carstone's name.

"I hear Miss Carstone is much worse to-night. They say she will never get about again, and young Myddleton looks

as if ready to commit suicide. Sylvia, you did not cut out the little teacher after all."

"What did you say about Miss Carstone?" demanded Sylvia, pausing with a pale face.

"They had her reported dying when I left the post-office, but folks *talk* so. Have you seen Bob Myddleton lately? Guess you finished up your business the day of the Cattle Show. No more *show for you* there, Sylvie."

But Sylvia was gone. Deaf to the laughter following the rude sally; blind to the mocking eyes. She only saw once more Faith Carstone's white face and Robert's despair.

She snatched up her hat and, still clad in the thin white dress she had worn all day, sped toward Greytower. She must see Robert. His neglect was forgotten in her generous, affectionate impulse. In the hour of darkness coming upon him she would not—nay, she could not stand aside.

She murmured his name tenderly, "Rob! oh, my *poor* Rob!" she said, as she ran through the dewy fields to the highway that led to Greytower.

VII.

DENMEAD OFFENDS HIS LAWYER AND FRIEND, AND SYLVIA OFFENDS GOOD TASTE.

Walter Denmead knew by the straight line in Louis Marchant's chin that he should be called to account for the scene now transpiring, and he waited in silence after the exit of Sylvia, attended by Mr. Bowman and Uncle Perry.

Denmead had been long a favorite of Mr. Marchant, and he knew the signs of his displeasure. But it had been some years since their relations had been intimate, and the elder had been made to feel during the late interview that Denmead was no longer the youth he had patronized. He also felt, however, a yearning fondness for the friend whom he had known to so bravely battle with poverty and overcome the circumstances of his hard life. The quiet way in which he had accepted the disappointment of the last few hours only made him the more to be respected and admired. Yet,

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as Louis looked at the fine physique and clean, clear face of his companion, he felt an impatient desire to shake him from the steady calm, and learn his reason for so promptly renouncing all claim to the Eldridge inheritance.

"Walter, I am at a loss to understand you. Have you lost your heart to that young woman that you treat me to such a scene?"

The other smiled a little. "I never saw her save once before, or have known her save as Mrs. Myddleton's *bête noir*," he replied. "No, I have never seen the woman yet I wished to marry. Like Benedict, I say, 'till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace.'"

"I'm not in a jesting mood, Walter. Tell me what you mean by renouncing this inheritance? What folly prompts you?"

"Pardon me, my friend, but I never intended to acquire this fortune through the chicanery of the law—"

"Denmead! You are dangerously personal."

"Your patience, Louis! Let us talk as man to man, and forget your profession. The law or so-called courts of justice are distasteful to me. I do not believe in them, in this, or any other country. What cannot be amicably arranged between individuals had best be met with the scriptural injunction: 'But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also.'"

"And when did thee turn Quaker, friend Denmead?" asked Louis Marchant with cool sarcasm.

Denmead flushed at the tone.

"I am not a Quaker in any sense of the term. I merely embrace a philosophy that seems clearer than any religious creed I have ever known."

"And unlike most men you really apply it to your daily life. But, come, my young fanatic, is it to cost you a fortune?"

"Marchant, it is not like you to deride an honest conviction. You know what my life has been. How I have struggled against doubt, and tried to fit men's creeds to a practical and reasonable Christianity. But this year I have found the

plain views of a literal interpretation of the Scripture all satisfying. I have followed, in fact, the wonderful thoughts of Count Tolstoi, and it has brought me patience and peace with the world's way. I confess the prospect of the money, of making my poor Faith independent, dazzled me. I longed to be able, like others, to do my share in the world's work faster, by reason of this money. But it was only money to me, nothing more. It evidently is more to that young woman. I shall not go to law about it, for I believe in no law or justice that has not Christ in it, and there is no court in this or any land qualified to more than decide the matter, as Miss Wendell or I would decide it."

There was a moment's pause during which Marchant looked helplessly at the firm earnest face of his friend.

"We used to hear," he said, "that the welfare of the individual must yield to the general good. Christ himself interfered with none of the laws of the country in which he taught. His lessons applied to our spiritual life, and he said himself, 'Render unto Cæsar, the things that are Cæsars, and unto God the things that are God's.'"

"Do you think, then, you can live one hour for heaven, and the next for earth? That is too much the general idea of Christianity. One day in church to six of rendering the tribute to Cæsar, or Mammon, in our case. No, I hold if we all followed Christ in resisting no evil, there would be no necessity of courts of justice."

"And do you look for that millenium soon, Walter?"

"Laugh as you will, Louis; no."

"I was wondering if, to follow out your quotation, you would share your cloak also with Miss Wendell, and even if she should compel you to go a mile or more *her* way, if you are prepared to go twain? She is a charming girl, and I think Bowman is quite ready now to follow any scriptural injunction such as loving one's neighbor as one's self, and so forth."

"Marchant! you—you are profane."

"Possibly your views appear to me a little strained, also."

"Have I ever been other than honest with you? I tell you the girl is a total

stranger to me, save that I dragged her from a machine in time to save her arm from being hurt at the Fair."

"Oh!"

"Do not persist in misunderstanding me. I could no more accept that inheritance through the law, than I can profess to believe Christ meant we should never appeal to such a grossly unjust law to decide any question. And if, believing this I swerve from it, I am a worse Christian than they who profess a firm belief in creeds more orthodox."

"Then you have forsworn all your former views?"

"I—I—have been in no church for three years. I could not continue in a path of what seemed to me hypocrisy."

"This is incredible. I cannot understand it, and you must permit me to express my disappointment in you. It shows a weakness of character that is appalling in one I deemed a tower of strength. If your struggle with life-issues has brought you to this impractical philosophy, born of a barbarous country and the outrages of its despotic government, I am sincerely sorry for you, Walter, and hope the day may come when you will see your error. I can understand a Tolstoi and his philosophy being the direct outgrowth of generations of evil government, that has already given birth to Nihilism and socialistic societies of all kinds and conditions. But that anyone brought up among the people in America can foolishly uphold such a philosophy, or look upon it as a reasonable reform, is incredible. Do you subscribe to all Tolstoi's ideas? Do you doubt the divinity of Christ? the atonement, the immortality of the soul?"

"Do not push me further, Marchant, it is only painful to us both."

"Nay, as friend to friend, Denmead, I demand more of you than a mere shadowy idea of this change in you."

"There are some truths, that seem so born with us, that we can no more reject them, than forget mother-love. I must still believe in Christ's divine mission, and the Hereafter."

Marchant drew a breath of relief.

"Then all you have said is only an example of what strange ideas often feed the intellect at the expense of the soul."

I confess in these days of so-called progress, I heartily am glad that, in His sight, intellectual attainments are as nothing. It is what *we are*, not what we *know*, that shall admit us into His sight. Spiritual life is the equalizer, and when we pass beyond, and know all that life has meant in its mysterious uncertainties, we shall find that no progress has left its tide-mark on our souls, save the spiritual progressions that have led us to serve Him humbly. *Humbly*, I say, and in no agnostic attitude. Saying *Thou knowest*, and this is enough!"

Louis Marchant spoke with thrilling earnestness, his blue eyes brilliant with feeling.

"Ah, Louis! for you life has been no problem. Every day has brought you ease of mind and body. And you have that young hope still as pure and fresh within you as long ago when we both knelt in St. Paul's school. I wish I could have retained the old love—"

"Do you think I have no care? no struggle to see clearly why I have been tried—" Marchant checked himself suddenly, looking as if he could have shown his friend more than one heavy burden under which his spirit even now was bending. But he only concluded in a quiet tone:

"If I have kept my faith, it is because I love the Lord my God with *all* my soul. Be humble, Walter, as humble in your attitude to him as toward those you love on earth. It is this pure humbleness of *love* that makes us His. He will grant you grace to throw off these fancies. In meantime, thank you for at least giving me a little peace upon which to rest in my thoughts of you. To have seen wrecked a life like *yours* on such a wild sea of individualism would have broken my heart. In this case justice is so entirely on your side—"

"Even to have mistaken selfish interest for justice before. I would rather be subject to injustice than feel I have caused another to suffer. I am only trying literally to 'love my neighbor as myself.' It is the pure unselfishness of Tolstoi's teachings that I desire to imitate. I have never done much for the world, but if by suffering I can ever so little aid others, why should I not suffer? It is by those who

have suffered that the world has advanced, *not* by the struggling contending reign of violence."

"You are trying to love your neighbor *more* than yourself, and Christ does not ask that of us. But it is useless to argue. I can only feel your very family blood entitles you to this inheritance, and—"

"That is sheer nonsense. Men are all equal. What am I? A mechanic working for daily bread. In point of sturdy health, better able to battle with the world than that girl."

"I am glad, however, that you do not accept Tolstoi in all particulars," said Mr. Marchant gravely. "And I hope yet to convince you, that my life as a lawyer is *not* wholly a crying sin against the words of my Master."

"Louis, for heaven's sake, do not, in turn, judge me harshly, that I have been frank with you. I would not have you misconstrue me. I am honest in my desire to appear only in a true light. I cannot lose your friendship. Do not turn from me in this hour of disappointment, not for myself, but my poor sister. Thoughts of her come crowding upon me at all times."

"How is she to-day?"

"About the same. She is hopelessly injured."

"And not even for *her* sake, Walter, will you put aside these scruples, and let me push your claim?"

Walter walked to the window and back before replying. His lips were compressed, and the veins in his temples strongly marked. "For no one's sake can I put aside a belief that has become part of my life. As you drew from me just now, I have still a strong belief in Christ's life of divinity, and as I believe there is no truer interpretation of His words than the one of non-resistance to evil. I *cannot* relinquish to any living soul, my one strong grasp on the things that appear to me of eternal importance. I refuse to make *any* claim to this estate."

The men regarded one another steadily a moment. Then Mr. Marchant rang the bell.

"Put my horse in the tilbury, James," he commanded the servant. "I will drive you to Greytower, Denmead, as I wish to see Myddleton. As a final word, let me

say that as Mr. Eldridge's friend and lawyer, I will represent this case in the courts. I regard it as a sacred duty to my late client."

Denmead bowed, but he felt as keenly as Miss Wendell, the extreme displeasure of the lawyer in this strange case.

It is only fair to a clear understanding of Walter Denmead's peculiar views to give a brief glimpse into his past. Only daily intercourse could acquaint one with the lovable qualities that swayed him ever to a kindly reverence for others' desires and wishes.

No one would have judged from the calm gaze of his pleasant brown eyes, what torture of doubt, and to what a verge of despair his past had drawn him.

At five-and-twenty he had fought the battle many men never encounter, but rush to the extreme of orthodoxy rather than confront. Half a truth would not content Walter Denmead. And his life had not been free of many temptations not always nobly resisted. He was painfully, if not morbidly conscious of his shortcomings, and had striven to conquer them, and Louis Marchant could have chosen no words more calculated to wound him than those in which he lamented his weakness. Denmead had long fancied he had attained a high plane of truth in hungrily accepting the ideas of Tolstoi on Christ's teachings. As he said this code made him at peace, at least, with his fellowmen, and more satisfied with his life as it reflected upon others. His had, perforce, been a life of sacrifice to others. Perhaps the selfishness innate in him had made the battle a harder one, for, one by one, his ambitions had been relinquished to the sharp tooth of poverty, and he was now nursing a philosophy, that seemed to hush the cries of desire. It was not in him to believe anything and act up to a partial fulfilment. He was but just beyond the point, where hard work brought its reward, and had felt his position secure, when his sister had fallen a victim to this accident. Poor Faith! he sighed as he thought of her. Perhaps, poor child, she was better lying there, than to have brought the dishonor upon him of having so illy repaid Mrs. Myddleton's kindness. Denmead had always condemned in his half-

sister the traits he despised in his step father, who never had a strong desire of his own, or resisted a weak one. The moment Walter saw his sister's glance seek Robert Myddleton, he knew she loved him, and had never striven to check—May Denmead felt she had encouraged Robert's advances. He had inspired her at once, by his vehement protest, with an abhorrence of a clandestine attachment. The accident followed, and since then, Denmead felt that Mr. and Mrs. Myddleton's eyes had been opened. Robert's downcast face told the story only too plainly. And miserable as Walter felt the situation to be, he resolved to remain silent, thinking this the course Mr. and Mrs. Myddleton intended to pursue.

But the misery of Robert's heart was to be lightened in a way no one could foresee. A higher power seemed guiding the lives of the youthful lovers, and awakening in Walter Denmead the iron force of pride, he thought pushed aside by his new philosophy.

While Mr. Marchant and Denmead rode toward Greytower, Robert Myddleton and his father were exchanging the harshest words of their lives.

Robert after vainly striving to obey his father, felt he could not overcome the restless love and misery if he was doomed to leave Greytower while Faith was so ill.

His mother was unable to help him, even had he not felt it was wrong to pain her further by an appeal. He knew she was wretched in watching his suffering, and both felt that the only natural way out of his present difficulty lay in the consent of his father to countenance his love for Faith, and upon this point they knew the father would be inexorable.

A week of gloomy silence resulted in Robert's seeking his father, and uttering in a quiet, but firm tone, his final resolution.

Mr. Myddleton was as much grieved as displeased at Robert's words, but he made no allowance for what the youth had endured in striving to obey him.

Robert was not quick tempered; of a sweet disposition, slow to anger, when once roused the storm burst with double fury. The first word of rebuke sent the fire through his veins, and the bitter un-

forgiving spirit of his words left his father shaken and white, as Robert flung himself from the room.

What could he do? how tell Florence, the fond mother, what had passed?

The father stood, blaming himself, with his son's last words ringing in his ears.

No, Guy Myddleton could not go to his wife yet. He paced the floor, and fought against the angel of love, overcoming the demon of pride and anger within him. The arrival of Denmead and Marchant roused him to shake off these tormenting thoughts, but on being left alone with Louis Marchant, Myddleton suddenly burst forth with the story of his struggle with his son. And seeing how shaken he was from his usual reserve, Marchant listened with grave sympathy, trying in every way to lighten his friend's burden.

He knew how keenly Guy Myddleton was suffering through this attachment for his son, for Robert's very youth was calculated to make the blow a bitter one, even had the girl been less dependent upon their patronage. Neither father or mother had deemed such an attachment within the range of possibilities, and a shame for the manner of wooing stung the Myddleton pride to the quick. Knowing his friend to be proud almost to arrogance, Louis Marchant found himself in the embarrassing position of a great sympathy for both sides.

And while they talked, the evening shadows grew longer, and a slender white figure was speeding its way toward Greytower. Weary indeed were the steps, and as she reached the park and passed the little lodge, her heart began to beat with apprehension. Once more she was acting upon an impulse that would in all probability cause censure. Would not they say she sought Robert Myddleton because she loved him? The hot blood surged to her forehead, and she clasped her hands to her heart with a quick cry. Perhaps Robert thought this, too. Perhaps he had kept away from her, knowing how she had coaxed him to take her to the Fair, and had been instrumental in bringing about his unutterable misery. The wretchedness of this thought sent the blood back to her heart again, and a blank despair seemed to fall upon her.

Sylvia Wendell had grown up with none of the restraint of a New England training. Her emotions had never been catalogued to appear at proper moments, under the conscious direction of a slow-beating heart. She felt and acted from a warm, impulsive nature, that had known only a father's doting fondness, until she faced a new and curious world. But her prompt and unerring judgment told her she was wrong in thus seeking Robert. She pressed her fingers to her throbbing temples, and stood irresolute. At the same moment her name was called, and she turned, with a quick gasp, to find Robert Myddleton coming swiftly toward her. He came so eagerly she had no time to recoil.

"Sylvia," he cried, in a glad voice, "I was coming to you. Have you thought me basely ungrateful? Did you understand my silence?"

"I do not know—perhaps you—oh, no, Robert, I cannot think *you* would misunderstand me. I—came—to know—tell me is Miss Carstone worse?"

"No, no; better, we hope. What have you heard?"

"I should not be here, but they said—she was dying!"

"No, they have told me every day she was no worse. Mother would not deceive me. But she is no better, and oh! Sylvia, the long weary days I've spent!"

"Why did you keep away, Robert? Tell me, even if you have to hurt me. I can bear the truth, better than to think *you* would try and make it easier for me. For I've trusted *you*, Robert. Have you thought harshly of me? Have *you* heard what they say of me?"

She shivered as she put the question, and searched his face for confirmation of her fears; but for reply he drew her down to a seat on a low wooden bench between some sheltering trees, and answered her in quick abrupt sentences. He seemed panting still from his interview with his father. He looked worn and ill to Sylvia.

"I could not come to you. I promised my father. I could not keep such a promise. I was a fool to try."

"Tell me, tell me all about it; oh, if I could only help you."

The sweet eager tone was balm in itself to Robert's troubled spirit, and he

poured out the story of the week. He did not fully realize what the estrangement from Sylvia's frank friendship had been, until he once more felt her glance upon him. He knew in that hour, that while he loved Faith Carstone with all his being, he had in Sylvia Wendell that rare thing, a friend true to the core of her heart. And he was to learn it still more deeply before they parted, for as he rushed on with his recital, repeating his father's words, Sylvia's head drooped lower and lower. Her eyes sank beneath his gaze, and when he had finished, to his distress, her shining head was bowed upon her hands.

"What have I said? have I been rough? did I repeat *all* he said? What a brute I am!" he cried.

She lifted her face then, and he saw a change had swept over it, more pitiful than tears could make it. She drew away from his light touch, and a hard sobbing sigh broke from her.

"Let me tell you what I feel, Robert. Then you must let me go. Go quite away, even if you never see me again."

"What do you mean?" he demanded.

"You must do as I tell you, no matter how hard it seems. I see it all now, and know how wrong we have been. Your father has seemed harsh and cruel, but he is *right*."

"Sylvia, how can you tell me—"

"Oh! stop, stop; listen to me, Robert. Your father has, after all, only asked you to obey him now, and leave the rest to time."

"He demands a condition that renders it impossible to comply. I cannot leave here to-morrow without seeing my poor Faith. He tries my obedience too far—"

"Hush, Robert. He is your *father*. I am not worthy his regard, and he bids you for love of him, put me out the question. All he knows of me is that I am a forward, foolish girl, without proper pride in conduct or bearing. Robert," shutting her small white teeth together in fierce consternation of herself. "I came here day after day to the lodge, hoping to see you, and to hear through Diadema Grey. I *longed* to see you; I *prayed* at night that to-morrow you would come." She paused, looking into his face with that strange, earnest scrutiny.

"And what of that, Sylvia? if I had only known, nothing should have kept me from you," he replied simply. She drew a quick sigh of relief.

"Thank you, Robert, you cannot understand how I *thank* you. But do you think the tongues are idle in Avon? Your father and mother have heard what they say of me down *there*, and it is that *I* love *you* as *you* love Faith."

"They *dare* not lie so about you, Sylvia," he cried, his chest heaving with anger. "I will deny it—"

"No," she said, checking him and speaking in an even tone, "I would not have told you this; but I want you to see how justified your father is in demanding you should give me up as your friend. I am fit to be no one's counsellor. The happiness of your mother, the respect you owe your father must not suffer through me. I—I—am not worthy of my own dear dead. Were I—to tell you otherwise. And, oh, Rob, the day will come when you *too* must stand alone. You, too, may falter, then, and make mistakes as I have. Go to your father now, Rob. Yield in all save your love for Faith. Submit to him, ask his pardon for your hard words. Tell him you will see me no more."

"But, Sylvia—" began the youth, appalled at the pale face of suffering.

She turned towards him.

"I cannot leave you thus. If he only knew you as I do—"

"He can *never* know me save as I am while I influence you to disobedience. I've been very blind. I am so lonely, so lonely. I wish God—would let me die!"

She lifted her face to the gray evening sky as she spoke, her eyes full of speechless sadness. Robert felt put aside by this hopeless wail. He tried in vain to find some comforting word, but only succeeded in clasping one of her cold little hands warmly in his, when a long, low whistle startled them.

"It is my father," cried Robert, and Sylvia had barely time to spring to her feet like a startled fawn and feel Robert's grasp upon her hand tighten, when she felt, rather than saw, that Mr. Myddleton and Walter Denmead stood before them.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]



One Valentine's Day.

BY KEZIAH SHELTON.

THE early days of February came sunny and smiling; the birds that had passed their Northern winter in the warm branches of the fir and spruce trees of the woods, were hopping lightly from the silvery blossomed pussy willows to the fringed and tasseled hazel and alder shrubs, now and then trilling forth from their tiny throats purest spring-like songs of joy.

Adown the hazel bordered country road came two rosy girls clad in navy blue walking suits, with here and there in their costumes a dash of red; their bright faces and wind-tossed hair crowned with jaunty crimson yarns with dark blue tassels.

Their steps were elastic with health and youth's undoubting hopefulness; they gave the finishing touch of life that made the scene a perfect one to two young men who were sitting, unobserved by them, in a sunny corner where two walls met, sketching the stretch of grey roadway with its shrub befringed edges and fluttering birds.

"By Jove! Be quick and sketch them, Jack, it is the one thing needed to make the theme perfect. There, they have paused, and how unconsciously graceful they are posing! Not often do you get such an accidental touch as this, and the picture will be the envy at the Annual Exhibition."

Rapidly the sketching went on, and later the girls resumed their steady tramp, tramp, keeping perfect step, and passing the two young men who looked as innocent as only the guilty can! If they had not sketched the girls, they naturally would have shown some consciousness of their approach.

Now, it was the girls who gave almost a start of surprise as they suddenly discovered the artist and his friend."

"What handsome stylish young men! Did you notice the moustache of the dark-haired one? What a natural wave it had, not that horrid waxy curl at the ends that makes you feel that it must have just come fresh from the barber's tongs," said Mabel Tinkham, who was something of an artist in her taste as regarded masculine beauty.

Being herself a rich hued blonde, it was but natural that she should have been attracted by the dark style of Roland Holland.

"No, I did not notice the dark one as being other than a common looking man, but the brown-bearded man—what a figure he had! And a perfect face!" and Mary Peck, with a graceful movement of her arm put up her hand to her hair, to assure herself that the wind had not blown it "every which way." "Really, are we blown quite into frights, Mabel? I wonder who those fellows are, and where they came from? One was sketching and the other leaning on the wall and looking; or do you suppose he was posing? Wouldn't he make a splendid portrait?"

"He? No, he couldn't hold a candle to the dark one. I wish we could know them, but what is the use of talking such nonsense; you and I shall never know such as he out in this wilderness! I wonder if pa will ever get his business straightened out, so that we can once more have a comfortable home in the city? For one, I am heartily tired of living out here in the country, shut out from all society. I don't see why men who know enough to do business on change don't know enough not to get 'fleeced,' as pa calls it. Oh dear, what made him 'fail' all at once, and send us out here to grandfather's?"

"I don't know, I am sure; buying long and selling short and buying short and selling long, and being rich a few years, and then suddenly 'as poor as Job's turkey' is a conundrum I cannot understand. But I began to feel that when pa and his clique was rich, then somebody was fleeced and made poor; we didn't know who it was, that was all, and we just enjoyed it. Now pa talks about our being 'fleeced,' and I suppose somebody is flourishing on the fleecing just as we did; and never dreaming that out here in the woods we, the fleeced, are dragging along miserably; shut out from all the things we used to have. How long have we worn these suits? Mine is actually sprouting a fringe around the bottom, sort of growing its spring foliage as one

might say. I wonder if we can have some new ones this spring?"

"I don't know. We have actually worn them three years; they were the last we had before we came here two years ago the fourteenth of this month. Don't you remember we were planning such fun for the novel valentine-party Lucy Hoyt had sent out invitations for? Then pa failed, and we arrived here at grandpa's the evening of the party. I thought I should die as we sat that night in the kitchen and watched grandpa popping corn and grandma cracking walnuts, and actually feeling that they were making a real good time for us!"

"Never fear, I remember it all; it was just horrid. And grandma says now she don't see what all our 'opportunities' have amounted to when we can't do half as much to help ourselves, as girls who never had half our chance!

"How provoked she is because we don't want to teach; and she is right; we couldn't do it if we did wish to. She told me this morning, if I wanted a new dress I ought to find some way to earn it; that it was a shame that pa had spent thousands of dollars on our school bills, piano lessons and French teachers, and after all we couldn't teach even the school in this district! And there's Nancy Farnum, who's never had a dollar spent on her schooling, got it all in the public school, and has earned ten dollars a week, for forty weeks a year, for the last five years; has helped her ma for her board, 'fore and after school, has dressed well, furnished her ma's parlor up, and put money in the savings' bank; and you two girls can't even give the neighbors' children lessons on a melodeon! Oh, I am sick of hearing it all; and the worst of the whole is—it is true; and, as much as we hate that old farmhouse and the way grandpa and grandma live, we have nowhere else to be!"

"Well, what can't be helped, can't; so what is the use of talking? We may just as well make the best of it and come right down, and take what fun there is going; so let's walk on to Betty Plummer's and tell her we will accept her invitation for to-morrow night, and go right in for a good time with the neighborhood young folks. I said at first I never would

do it, but then I did not expect to stay here forever: now I begin to think we may. But, let's draw the line at marrying: we will flirt with the boys and have a good time. 'Twill be something to take up our time. Grandpa and grandma will like all but the flirting; they will begin to have hopes of us and think we are at last growing sensible, and we can keep dark about our real opinions of folks and things. I hope, though, they will not play kissing games. Just think of having grandpa's hired man kiss us! Of course, he is invited."

II.

Betty Plummer was quite overcome by the sudden cordiality of Mabel Tinkham and her adopted sister, Mary Peck, and for the rest of the day was in quite a flutter of excitement over the event.

Roland Holland and his friend, Jack Staples, had chanced upon the Plummer farm for their halting place in this neighborhood while sketching. When they returned to a late dinner the voluble, gay hearted Betty chattered of her morning callers, and with country freedom soon had given the young men a full history of neighbor Tinkham's oldest son, who had "years ago left the farm and gone to New York as a clerk, and later had become what the country people called a stock-gambler; had been rolling in money a few years, and married a city girl; later had lived in Europe a few years, and then, just as all gamblers do, suddenly he began to lose, and all at once found himself at the bottom of the heap and glad enough to send his two girls out to his old home, which had never been good enough for them to visit when they had lots o' money."

She told the young men that the girls were real nice, but couldn't do a thing to earn a dollar, and seemed actually proud of it!

Then she talked of her valentine party, and the young men having identified Mabel Tinkham and Mary Peck as the two stylish young ladies of the morning episode, entered heartily into Betty's plans, and soon had given the quick-witted country girl some hints about valentine tricks. Betty was always ready for a good-natured joke and readily agreed to their suggestions.

In response to one of these she went over to grandpa Tinkham's on the evening of the thirteenth and told the girls of these tricks. One was for the girls to take an early morning walk on the fourteenth and the first man they met would surely be their future husband! Others were to be tried at the house. One of these was to go out into the dark, and standing on the doorstep unwind a ball of twine for a few yards and holding the end of the twine in one hand, with the other throw the ball as far out into the darkness as possible, then begin to wind up the end in their hand, repeating these lines:

"I wind this long line so very fine,
Hoping to find at the other end,
The love I would call my valentine,
The man I'd choose for lover and friend."

Then, unless one was a predestined old maid, at the end of the line would stand before the maiden her future husband, who would yield the line to her, clasp her in his arms and take his first kiss and disappear in the darkness, and when the Fates were propitious she would meet this very man, perhaps be introduced to him in the most prosaic and orthodox manner; but surely some day he would come to claim the hand of the maiden he had kissed in the dark!

"I shall go for a walk before breakfast to-morrow morning, Mary; will you go too?" cried Mabel gleefully.

"Indeed I will not. You'll be sure to meet somebody's hired man driving the cows to the spring for water," replied Mary scornfully.

Then she continued, "I will control my impatience to see my hero until evening. I shall throw the ball of twine from your back door-step, and let it roll down the slope into the garden, and then gently draw my hero up to give me that sweet betrothal kiss, and as it is hardly proper to accept anything from a stranger, I will return it at once," and Mary joined in the general laugh.

Betty went home and reported.

Early the next morning Mabel went out for a walk and for half a mile met no one, not even a hired man driving cows to water, nor a milkman going toward the village.

Suddenly, as she turned a corner, she came face to face with the dark, moustached stranger she had seen a few mornings ago posing so gracefully beside the stone wall as his friend sketched. With a chivalrous air he lifted his hat and passed around the corner.

Mabel was not more romantic than the ordinary girl, yet her heart throbbed more rapidly, and the rich color swayed back and forth in her shapely cheeks, as she wondered if there could be anything in such happenings, and queried mentally over and over again, "who could he be, where from, and with whom was he staying in that neighborhood, and would she maybe sometime really meet and speak with him?"

But it was time to return for breakfast, and, lo! he was returning, and politely lifted his hat once more from the close-cut, dark, curling locks.

Evening came, and Mabel and Mary were much entertained by the society into which they were for the first time introduced. Hitherto they had held themselves aloof from the young people about them.

The remembrance of their New York circle, their winters at Washington, the years spent in London, Paris, Mentone and Nice had been too fresh in their memories to admit of their acknowledging that they could associate even temporarily with those so far removed from their set.

But the innate love of some sort of sociality had conquered their exclusiveness at last, or rather the hopelessness of ever resuming their old place, had forced them to yield.

The hours ran on in more or less stupid games until ten o'clock, when one by one, the unbetrothed maidens slipped away from the party to try some trick. Unobserved they were not, and it was easy to guess who hoped to be the favored one, as, after each girl passed out, some admiring swain was sure soon to follow.

None of the country youth dared follow stately Mary Peck, and the envious tongues whispered, "She'll not meet anyone; she holds her head too high."

On the back-door step Mary stood, half shivering with the chill night air, half with a superstitious thrill.

Slowly she wound the ball after throwing it, softly repeating the rhymes as told by Betty. For a while the line was slack as if lying along the ground, then it became a bit more taut, and soon she was sure there was some unknown attachment at the other end of the line.

When she saw a figure actually coming toward her in the darkness, she nearly lost her self-possession; but her pride came to her aid; she would not scream and make herself an object of ridicule before those country youths; she felt herself so much superior to them, that it would have been the last thing she could have endured. The light from a window suddenly flashed upon the advancing figure. It was the brown bearded stranger, who at that moment clasped her in his arms, kissed her lips rapturously, released her gently and disappeared like a dream in the darkness!

It was some moments ere she had recovered sufficiently to re enter the house with a calm, undisturbed face, except for a rich, deep flush not at all an ordinary color with her.

Here, she had need of all the self-possession years in society had given her, for in her absence two guests had arrived.

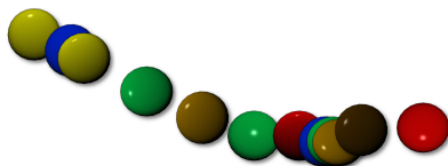
Mabel was already chatting freely with Roland Holland and Jack Staples!

Why prolong the story? The end was the usual one; the new acquaintance soon ripened into an old; the acquaintances became friends and in time lovers. Then came the quiet wedding at grandpa's; the short bridal tour, and the prosaic settling down as housekeepers in two small flats in New York, where in domestic contentment they dwelt ever after, in as great a degree of continuous harmony as falls to the average families.

Grandma made this domestic peace possible, by persistently insisting that both girls should take daily practical lessons in her kitchen; that the period of courtship should commence in learning the art of household economies. The girls sometimes rebelled, fancying that things would manage to go on somehow, without all that trouble.

But grandma had her way, knowing that a young man with a moderate income has double need of a competent home keeper.

"Pa" never made a second fortune, but drifted from Mabel's to Mary's, and haunted Wall street with other ghosts of "better days."





The Cotters' Saturday Nights.

BY H. ASHMEAD.

WE are the Cotters. There are papa and mamma. Then there is myself, who am Janet. We live on Commonwealth Avenue in a very elegant house. As far as residence and position go, mamma has reached the summit of her ambition. Mamma is very ambitious, tho' why she should be I cannot tell. She was born rich, and has had riches thrust upon her ever since I can remember. Papa was rich when she married him and he has more money now than he can count. Mamma's blood is of the bluest and papa's is even bluer. Mamma has always been one of the leaders in our most exclusive Boston society. But still she is not satisfied.

Now papa and I are not so at all. Of course I like to have nice things, and to dress as well as the other girls, but I'm not a bit stuck up, don't you know? And as for dear papa, as long as I have everything I want, he is happy.

Mamma's chief aim in life now is to see me the wife of a Russian Prince or an English Duke, (with a leaning, I think, toward the Duke), and to this point she bends all her energies. I am twenty-five and am still without a legal protector. To hear mamma talk one would suppose she really wanted to get rid of me. Of course I don't want you to think that it is from necessity that I am one of Massachusetts' "great majority," for I have had offers, quite a number of them; but I seem to have no heart. I think I must have been robbed of it.

We have receptions every Saturday evening. I once spoke of them as the "Cotters' Saturday Nights." Some of our friends took it up and they go by that name entirely now. People enjoy them, I think; at least they seem to. We always aim to have some attraction which is kept a profound secret until the last moment, so really I suppose people come as much out of curiosity as anything; but anyway they *come*, and in crowds, too. Sometimes it is a singer, again an actor. The Swedish Quartette charmed us with their lovely songs one

night, and once M. Coquelin favored us with a monologue.

To-night the attraction is to be the Duke of Barchester. You see the whole family of us spent the season in London this year. His Grace was certainly quite attentive, and invited us down to one of his beautiful castles for a week's visit. But to mamma's chagrin, the momentous question was not propounded. However, mamma is most hopeful. He came on board to see us off and said he should come over this Winter, so she invited him to come directly to us. He has written frequently, and yesterday we received a telegram from New York that he would arrive to-day.

It really is very fortunate that papa's financial affairs are in a prosperous condition, for mamma has been ordering such heaps of charming clothes with which I am to forge the final links in the chains that bind his lordship. I myself believe that these chains are of no greater strength than a cobweb, for at Barchester Castle, we met a very sweet and lovely girl, Lady Helen Elliott, who seemed to me to hold considerable right and title in the affections of the Duke. If I didn't think that I should hate him, I know. As it is, we are the best friends possible. But mamma expects to lead him through Boston, bound by those imaginary chains, to her triumphal car.

THIS AFTERNOON.

"November chill blows loud wi' angry sugh,

The short'ning winter's day is drawing to a close,"

and I am sitting before the fire in the library, waiting until such time as

"The toil-worn cotter frae his labor goes,"

in other words, until papa shall tear himself away from his beloved Somerset Club, and allow himself to be driven home in the coupé. He likes to find me here when he comes in, and we have a quiet little chat all by ourselves, I perching myself upon his knee quite as if I were still his "Little Woman."

We spent Thanksgiving at our place in Lenox, and only came into town yesterday, so I still feel as if I were visiting. It is now five thirty, and the Duke arrives at six; dinner at seven. I know I ought to go and dress, but I must wait for papa. As I sit here thinking drowsily, and wishing the Duke had remained upon the other side of the vast expanse, I hear the hall door close, and through the half-drawn portière I can see mamma come in. I do hope she won't notice me, for she will be sure to scold because I am not arraying myself for conquest. And mamma can be very disagreeable at times.

But, after all, I have on a very good looking black retret gown, and I believe I'll dine in that. I'm sure I look very well in it.

Presently Richards let in papa, my dear handsome father, who stops to kiss his daughter before he takes off his sealskin coat. I put him in the biggest chair and seat myself upon the arm, with his beautiful white head against my shoulder while I—

“—his weay carking cares beguile.”

“And what about the Duke, my dearest?”

“O, papa, dear, I don't want the Duke, and the Duke doesn't want me! It's only one of mamma's schemes.”

“I'm very glad, my dear. I'd rather my little woman would marry someone else if I must ever lose her, though I have nothing to say against the Duke.”

I wonder what made papa look so queer when he said that! But mamma comes sailing in, in gorgeous array, sends papa off to dress for dinner, and sits down to lecture me upon my short-comings. Her maroon Sicilienne is for this special occasion, and I have not seen it before. Mamma is certainly very handsome. It is such a pity that I am not good looking. I think mamma is positively ashamed of me at times!”

But papa thinks me an “awful little swell,” and is always satisfied with me, so I don't mind mamma's opinion so much.

The Duke has arrived, dinner is over, and the Cotters' Saturday Night is in full blast. I don't know exactly what that expression may mean, but I heard it used somewhere in this connection, so I put it in.

I have on a marvelous blue crêpe that makes me the envy of all beholders, and the Duke is most devoted. What feminine mortal could desire a more felicitous state of existence? The Duke is *very* nice; nicer than ever, I think. Such a pity I don't love him, and he doesn't love me, isn't it?

We certainly have played a trump card now. People are dumfounded that we actually have kept to ourselves, for a whole week, the projected advent of a DUKE!

He and I are standing talking together during a lull in the duties of receiving. Helen Morgan and Cartland are in front of us. Their engagement has just been announced, and as I watch them, a sigh escapes me.

“What a tremendous sigh! One might be led to believe you are a victim of the tender passions.”

“I am.”

To which he replies, as in duty bound, “Might I dare hope that I am the object of that priceless affection?”

“No. It is not you whom I love.”

What *would* mamma say if she knew what I had done!

He doesn't seem to be at all cast down by the rebuff, for he says most cheerfully, “But we will always be friends?”

“Always, I hope, and I also hope that Lady Helen will let me come to her wedding.” Whereupon he actually blushes, and looks as foolish as one could desire.

O, *who* is it that I see making his way up to mamma through the crowd? It must be, it is, Charlie Arlington! Charlie Arlie, as I called him when we were children together, Charlie Darling, as he came to be later on. Yes, I suppose I may as well confess it—it is he who has my heart. We've always been lovers ever since we were born. But when his father died and left hardly enough to bury himself, and Charlie went to work, like a sensible boy, mamma immediately commanded his dismissal. And she fondly imagines that her commands were obeyed! It seems such an absurd idea for me to cast off the man I love, just because he is poor, when my father can count his millions with two figures! Not that my dearest papa had anything to do with it, for he would give us half his

money if he thought I wanted to marry Charlie. But he has always seen him here so much that I don't suppose it occurred to him that there was any particular attachment between us. Papa offered to set Charlie up in any kind of business, but Montague & Frost offered him a place as book-keeper at fifteen hundred a year, and he took it at once. Mr. Montague is his cousin, you know.

That seemed to be the last straw that broke the camel's back, and it was then that mamma said some very unpleasant things about him, and forbade me to have anything more to do with him. I to marry a *clerk*! Had I been a princess of the realm, she could not have been more scandalized.

So then Charlie decided to go away. Somewhere in the dim ages of the past he had studied medicine, and received his diploma, but having grown rather rusty, he took a year's course at the medical school, and then pitched his tent in Denver. That's where he is now, or rather was, until he came on here.

Mamma is *not* glad to see him! I can grasp that fact even at this distance. She evidently considers him a wolf in the fold, and would fain banish him to remote regions.

He is coming over to me now, and I don't quite know whether to run away or faint in his arms in the approved melodramatic style.

"Ah, ha!" says the Duke, "sits the wind there?" which reminds me that my face is telling more than it should, so I pull myself together and decide neither to run nor to faint.

I am *very* glad to see him. Perhaps that fact makes up for mamma's frigidity. He seems to be quite happy, anyway.

Our eyes say many things while I am introducing him to the Duke, who is very nice to him. And then his lips tell me that he was seized with a sudden uncontrollable desire to once more behold—Boston, and that he has only until a week from Monday before he must return to Denver. Here his eyes make another remark, which I do not quite understand, but he will amplify later on.

As soon as Mamma decently can, she carried Charlie off to "Introduce him to such a *charming* girl." He goes as grace-

fully as possible, and if I didn't *know*, I should think him enraptured at the prospect of the charming girl.

Presently I see him in the hall, so I go into the library with Channot, and once there, basely desert him, and slip into the hall.

Together, Charlie and I make our way, not to the orthodox retreat for lovers, the conservatory, but to the china closet, as that seems to be the only available place at present.

Silence for the space of five minutes. But that silence is eloquent. Verily, silence is golden. Then he interprets that speech of the eye as meaning that he is determined to take me back to Denver with him, a week from Monday! It seems quite useless for me to raise the usual objections, for he says I shall go. He has seen papa this afternoon, and he gave him his blessing. I suppose that's why papa looked so odd when he asked me about the Duke.

Enter the Duke himself.

"O, happy love! where love like this is found!
O, heartfelt raptures! bliss beyond compare."

Quoted he, gaily. "I have told him of the 'Cotters.' I have been hunting all over the place for this 'youthful, loving, modest pair.' I thought it would be better for you, my dear, if I were among the missing, also," with a little laugh.

Then Charlie's wild project is disclosed to him.

"You can't expect me to take much interest in that scheme, considering that you have just jilted me!"

"It doesn't seem to weigh upon you much," I retort, "but you'll give your consent, won't you?"

"Well, I'll see how you behave. But, now, we'd better return to the halls of dazzling light, or 'mamma' will descend upon us unawares."

So Charlie kisses me very coolly, whereupon the Duke says, laughingly:

"I think I might have one, too, since all my hopes are blighted, and that sort of thing, don't you know?"

As Charlie grants his gracious permission, the Duke kissed me upon the lips, putting, as he says, the seal upon a friendship that shall only end in the grave. Then Charlie helps himself to a few more, and finally we manage to get out of the

china-closet, and part from Charlie in the little side-hall.

As the other two of us enter the drawing-room, evidently absorbed in each other, I can see mamma's brow clear; she has evidently been suffering untold agony in her anxiety as to my whereabouts; but as long as I am with the Duke —

TWO WEEKS LATER.

The last thing Charlie said to me that night was that he should take me with him, nolens volens, and true to his word he did, or at least we have got as far as Chicago, on our way to Denver.

Mamma certainly was very disagreeable about Charlie, and if it hadn't been for that most adorable Duke, who stood by us like a trump, I don't know what would have become of us. Charlie called on Monday, and what should mamma do but politely request him not to call again. And as she persisted in accompanying me every time I stepped my foot outside the house, my opportunities for love-making were limited. But as the Duke was so very devoted, and as I was so seemingly content in his society, by Wednesday her fears were so far allayed that she allowed me to go to a matinee with his lordship, otherwise unattended.

And if the Duke did tell Charlie, when he delivered my daily letter to him at the club, that he had taken an extra seat for him, surely it wasn't my fault. And when he was sitting right there beside me, I couldn't be blamed for letting him squeeze my hand, now and then, could I?

And afterward, of course, we had to go into Parker's for a cup of tea, and while we were there we concocted a little plan that, with the help of His Grace of Barchester, made us the beatified couple that we are.

You see we hadn't laid any plans for the next Saturday's sensation. Either mamma was so taken up with my affairs or else she considered that the Duke shed glory enough upon us for two receptions. Anyway, nothing was going on, so at dinner, Wednesday night, the Duke said to mamma: "I have a most delightful plan for next Saturday night, my dear madame." (I believe that one reason why mamma adores him so is because he

always calls her madame.) "You are not to know anything about it until it comes off. All you will have to do is to look very wise and mysterious when anyone mentions 'Saturday night,' and make them all think you could tell volumes if you choose. Miss Janet will help me, and it will be awfully nice."

Of course anything *the Duke* might choose to do could not fail to be delightful, and mamma cheerfully agreed to everything he said. How pleased and gratified she did look as she beheld William, tenth Duke of Barchester, and myself ensconced in a dim corner of the drawing-room, talking over the "plan!" Poor mamma! She would not have worn so contented and smiling a countenance could she have foreseen the downfall of all her cherished hopes and plans.

Everything did go off beautifully. Dear, darling papa told me to get everything I wanted, and I wanted a great many things. And how handily came in all the swell gowns mamma had ordered for the subjugation of the Duke! She builded better than she knew when she ran up those tremendous accounts at Redfern's, and Worth's, and Donovan's!

We have always had heaps of flowers at our "Saturday Night," so there was nothing to be seen to in that line. And our suppers are always swell, though I say that shouldn't. It seemed as if the whole thing did itself, somehow.

Just after dinner mamma came into my room to ask me what I was going to wear. She made no objections, after that first day, to my dining in the old black velvet, for "the Duke likes it."

Annette was just laying out my white watered silk, as mamma entered. "Why, how bride-like you will look. I hope it will not be long before you are a bride in earnest," and then she went down stairs, the folds of her dark blue velvet trailing majestically after her. And when I was arrayed in the white moire, I also went down and received with her as usual.

Presently the Bishop came, and then the rector of Trinity. Next Charlie was shown in, and coming up to mamma, hoped she would allow him to trespass upon her hospitality for a few moments on this occasion, as he was taking his departure for the West on Monday. This,

mamma, was graciously pleased to allow, and as he stood there talking to her, I ran upstairs and put on my veil.

When I came down the Bishop and the rector were in their surplices, and had taken their places at the farther end of the drawing-room. The Duke and Charlie went and stood together in front of them. Papa met me at the foot of the stairs, and led me in.

Such a hush as fell upon that crowd! And even then they couldn't tell which it was to be! But in a moment they knew, for the Duke took my bouquet, and stepped back, leaving me at the side of my own true love. Then papa gave "this woman to be married to this man," and in a few moments Mrs. Charles Arlington faced the assembled company.

Mamma braced up, and came through it with colors flying. I had half expected that she would declare herself an impediment, but she left us in peace, and I promised "to love, honor and obey till death us do part."

■ She had no idea of letting our dear five hundred know that she had lost her game, not she. She smiled gayly, and

said such sweet things of "her children who had been lovers ever since they were babies;" and "it might be just the least bit theatrical, but we thought it would be so pleasantly informal; and then, we were always so opposed to this vulgar display of presents and all that sort of thing, don't you know!"

Ah! Trust mamma to brave the world! If the cogs of the machinery of her plans had refused to fit into each other our guests were none the wiser, and she was looked upon as the happiest of the happy. But she came out nobly at the end and forgave us completely, and she and papa are coming to Denver right after Christmas.

And I? I am with the man I love! What more? But we are not so badly off, for papa gave me a little package when I came away, and the mortgages and bonds amount to about five hundred thousand dollars.

The Duke came to New York with us, and in the spring Charley and I are going to see him married to Lady Helen Elliott.





Aunt Fanny.

BY CORNELIA REDMOND.

Author of "At Heatherhill," etc.

IT is the evening of St. Valentine's Day and there is a party at grandpa's for the young people.

Lights are shining from every window of the old Massachusetts farm house, and in the big fire-place in the hall a great pile of logs is blazing.

Before it sits grandpa, his hair as white as the flakes of snow which each new arrival brushes off from his or her coat. He wears a happy, patriarchal smile as he watches the merry party.

Aunt Fanny having seen that the gayeties are fairly started has slipped away upstairs to her room, which is at the far end of the hall looking out upon the sea.

She softly closes the door and placing her candle on a chair kneels down before an old oak chest which stands beside one of the windows.

She unlocks it with a small key, she takes from her pocket and raises the lid.

The chest is empty, but for a few little things that lie at one end. The first of these that Aunt Fanny takes in her hand is a picture, a queer old-fashioned tin type, framed in a little strip of brass. She holds it close to the flickering candle and the tears come to her eyes. The picture is of a young man with large dark eyes and thick curling hair. What memories it brings back. Of a little curly-haired boy who used to carry her books from school. How, in later years, he had gone away to the great city to acquire fame and fortune; and sweetest of all is the memory of that bright summer time when he came home for a holiday, and learned for the first time how dear his little schoolmate was to him.

She remembers how her heart had bounded with joy and surprise when he told her that he loved her and wished her for his wife. She had always loved him, but he was so handsome, and had seen so many people in the great city, how could it be, she wondered, that he should care so much for her?

From a little yellow envelope she gently lifts a curl of dark brown hair. She remembers how he had cut it off one evening with her embroidery scissors,

laughingly saying that it always fell over his right eye when he wanted to write.

Now she takes out a little box and removes the cover. It contains only some brown and withered leaves. They were once rich crimson roses he had sent her as a valentine. How well she remembers that evening. Just such another as to-night.

Now her thoughts wander on to those dread days when the war for the Union broke out. How trifling it had seemed at first. Every one thought that it would all be over in a few weeks or months at the most. But time went on, the struggle grew fiercer and one by one the fathers, husbands and brothers left to join the fight.

Then the day came when he knew that his country was calling him, and then—the parting.

Aunt Fanny's tears fall thick and fast on the faded roses, as one after another those scenes of the past return to her.

She had received letters from time to time, letters full of love and hope. Ah, there they lie now, yellow with age and tied together with a little blue string.

Then came the fearful struggle at Gettysburg, and after that—silence.

Aunt Fanny rises from her knees and walks to the window. The snow has stopped falling and a few pale stars are to be seen, the same stars that are looking down on his last resting place.

She gazes across the great expanse of water and remembers how as a child she used to think that the sky and sea met at the horizon, and that if one should take a boat and sail and sail you would finally come to Heaven. Ah, Aunt Fanny, you whose everyday work is for others, have found a surer way than that.

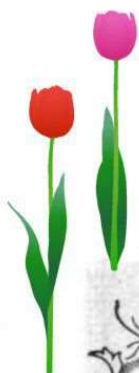
A tap at the door and a girlish voice calls.

"Aunt Fanny, won't you come down and play a Virginia reel for us?"

"Yes, dear, I will come," and then Aunt Fanny turns the key on her treasures.

Merry laughter echoes as the young people join in the old fashioned dance.

And without the silent stars still look on that nameless grave where Aunt Fanny's hero sleeps.



Kerry's Answer.

BY MARGARET BISLAND.

Half past nine o'clock a steady stream of well-dressed men and women began to pass slowly up and down the wide staircase, through the palm-fringed hall and into the drawing-room cleared for dancing—at ten they fell into groups, and then into couples, who commenced to revolve rhythmically to the sweet, clear strains of "La Gitana," played by the Hungarian band secreted somewhere in a palm-bower—by eleven, the number of arrivals ceased, and the young men and women who had been so fortunate as to secure an invitation to Miss Lillian Hasting's *debüt* ball, addressed themselves to the business in hand with commendable ardor.

The great three-tiered brass and crystal chandeliers shed the glow of their myriad lights over gleaming white shoulders, and correct black dress-coats; the long mirrors reflected the brilliant picture of many colored filmy gauze and lace gowns, softly flushed cheeks, eyes bright with the excitement of pleasure—in fact, all the glow and color that lends to a ball-room its beauty, ephemeral in quality, perhaps, but bewitching while it lasts—a student of human nature in every case, an elderly man or woman, will tell us that despite

the light, laughter, music and gay chatter, there are many of Miss Hasting's guests who hide under smiles and bright repartee numberless heavy cares and bitter griefs. No doubt the student is in a measure correct; but this prophetic sage must be elderly and experienced to discern the hypocrisy of hearts which a girl so young, pretty and generous natured as Kerry Balfour, will never understand.

She, Kerry, dear little girl, was watching the beautiful scene with shining eyes from a leafy retreat in the music-room, and entertaining her companion by quaint criticisms of society in general and balls in particular. From the first moment when she set her dainty slippered feet on the polished floor early in the evening, her brow was crowned with the roses of a ball room's triumphs. Her dance-card was filled with the names of eager, admiring young men, and it was with an air of languid condescension, delightful to behold, that she allowed her waltzes to be ruthlessly cut into halves and thirds to satisfy the importunings of tardy aspirants to her hand in the dance. Her eyes and lips were full of answering smiles; her feet trod the graceful measure lightly and easily. The good sweet bloom of her cheeks rose under the fire of sincere or flippant compliments and admiring glances, and the Kerry, who but yesterday was a simple, quiet child, bloomed like a flower under the sun's ardent gaze, to a lovely woman. She was testing for the first time the strength of her feminine fascinations, and found the experiment full of strange exhilaration.

As the music wound rapidly to a finale

Kerry sank into her chair behind the palms with a happy little sigh to confess herself tired, and ready for a proffered ice. Her companion looked down at her with something of amusement in his eyes, as she daintily sipped of a frozen pink rose he had secured in the supper-room; but his manner was flatteringly solicitous and grave. He listened carefully and replied quickly to her gay sallies, and in no wise attempted to conceal the genuine pleasure he found in watching her ardent gestures and rapidly varying expression. He had noticed her when he first entered the room but a few moments ago. His humor was at that time scarcely a pleasant one, owing to a number of causes—firstly, because although a native of New York, and in his early youth a lover of her society, he had for the past five years lived everywhere else—in Europe and South America principally, and on coming home very suddenly one day, he found, as all returned exiles and wanderers will, that notwithstanding his absence, people in the great city had changed and readjusted themselves without his leave; so although quickly recognized, and warmly welcomed by old friends, he felt lonely and out of place.

When a cordial note from Mrs. Hastings met him at the club, begging that he would look in on them Tuesday night, he felt half-tempted to plead a previous engagement; but he remembered, with a smile, Lillian, as he last knew her in short frocks, as a sweet child, and Mrs. Hastings' unfailing kindness to him when a boy, so he wrote a personal note of acceptance, promising to drop in for a moment after the Van Antwerp's dinner, mentally determining never to be caught in this manner again.

"I have become too settled in my tastes to enjoy any longer the tinsel and flash of the ball-room," he reasoned to himself; "dinners are more to my mind. Young girls have grown flippant, and thin elbowed nowadays. I bore them with my stiff ways, as they do me. Ah, well! I shall be amused at the Van Antwerp's, first by the clever Miss Grayburn, and then resign myself for an hour to giggles or dull stupidity at the Hastings'."

The dinner was correct, very. The guests well chosen, and Miss Grayburn

brilliant, handsome and more gracious in her manner than ever before. Mr. Richard Hatham lingered at her side till the last moment to tear himself away with regretful words and raging inwardly at the confounded nuisance of this children's ball. Abominable! to dull the edge of his evening's pleasure.

His handsome face wore an expression of cold indifference as he lounged in the ball room doorway awaiting an opportunity to greet his hostess, chatter a bit of nonsensical flattery to the debutante and then escape. A slim, blonde young man, whom he recognized as Mr. Jim Brady, lounged with him, swinging a big bouquet of roses and pointing out the rich or pretty women.

"Yes! You don't say so!" answered Richard with lukewarm interest in his voice and wandering gaze as Mr. Brady detailed and dilated on the moneyed value of Miss so and so in the yellow frock.

"Who is that young girl in the white gown, with dark hair and eyes, talking to young Lord," demanded Richard with sudden interest.

Mr. Brady's face clouded. "Oh!" with slighting emphasis, "she is Mrs. Forrest's niece, Southern girl, you know, from New Orleans, I believe; deadly poor as all those people are, but pretty enough. The boys have made considerable of a fuss over her to-night; they will soon find out her financial circumstances tho', and she will learn that no woman rules by beauty alone, at least in New York—money before good looks any day."

"Suppose you introduce me," answered Richard as though he had not heard Jim's latter remarks.

"Oh! if you wish to know her I'll introduce you; come along. Ah-er, Miss Balfour, Mr. Hatham."

Kerry glanced up, flushing with pretty confusion and dropping her ball card, which Mr. Hatham deftly rescued. Before Brady could remonstrate or claim his waltz, just beginning at that moment, Richard whirled Miss Balfour off and left the angry Jim standing.

Nothing so raises a new male acquaintance in a girl's estimation as to find in him a good dancer.

Notwithstanding the lack of practice, Richard Hatham had not forgotten his long, smooth waltz step, and when the music ceased Kerry bestowed a smile of honest thanks for the dance. Between the sips at the ice she frankly acknowledged her delight with New York society, demanded his admiration of her bouquet, and before Richard realized the fact, he had forgotten his boredom, Miss Gray-

that she pretended not to see Jim Brady and young Gordon pass and repass her bower in search of their truant partner. But fate in the form of Aunt Forrest discovered the retreat. That lady had grown weary of the noise and lights, and gladly acquiesced with her daughter Florence in the proposition to go home at once.

"But where is Caroline," enquired



"WHY THERE SHE IS, I DECLARE," CRIED MRS. FORREST.

burn, his hostess, even the whole ball, in watching the charming play of expression that flitted over Kerry's face as he spoke of his travels, books and, even reserved man as he was, of some of his aims for the future. The merry music of waltz and lancers was only an accompaniment to his well modulated voice. And Kerry, naughty girl, felt so pleased and flattered by the conversation and gently deferential attitude of her companion,

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Aunt Forrest of Mr. Brady, who sauntered up, a sulky frown darkening his face.

"Oh, she went off with Richard Hatham half an hour ago, and I have not been able to find her since," he answered.

"Why there she is, I declare," cried Mrs. Forrest, her keen eyes piercing the gloom of the shrubbery. "Come, my dear, at once, Florence and I are quite ready to leave. Ah, Mr. Hatham is it

possible that you have returned after all these years."

With many expressions of pleasure at the meeting, Aunt Forrest introduced her daughter, and insisted in the same breath that Richard should call very soon at No. — Fifth Avenue. "On Tuesday, our day at home, do not forget," she insisted as he accompanied the ladies to their carriage and raised his hat with words of hearty acceptance.

As they rattled over the uneven pavements Kerry leaned back with a little sigh of contentment. Her first ball, how nice it had been and how sorry she was to come away. That last dance with Mr. Hatham she would never forget it? A feeling of elation crept into her heart as she recalled that gentleman's parting glance, and his murmured words of thanks for their talk as he deftly laid her wrap about her shoulders. She remembered that he had danced with no one else, that his eyes were a very charming blue, and that she would see him Tuesday. Aunt Forrest's voice broke in on her musings; that good lady was holding forth to the silent Florence on Mr. Hatham's perfections, his antecedents and his fortune.

"Of the best people in New York," she continued volubly; "his mother was a Miss Vane, very rich, you know; so was his father; and when Richard was left an orphan at sixteen, with his wealth and good looks, he was even then considered as well worth cultivating. He graduated at Harvard, and then went out for a season or two. Some people say he was very much in love with the youngest Miss Grayburn; but he suddenly went abroad to stay five years, and now he has come home he will be more than ever before a tempting bait to scheming mothers and ambitious girls. But, for my part, I think such angling for a man undignified, and am happy to say there is never any necessity of my practicing such social maneuvers," wound up Mrs. Forrest in a tone of satisfaction.

During the three weeks succeeding the Hastings' ball, Kerry met Mr. Hatham a number of times. He came to Mrs. Forrest's reception tea according to his promise, and found the pretty niece busy behind a dainty tea-table; but he lingered to chat

with her a moment, and beg permission to send her cards for a private exhibition of famous paintings. At the Bleeker's dinner, he found himself seated next her, and meeting once or twice in a morning canter in the Park their friendship grew apace. They talked of books, horses, the opera, the stars at the leading theatres. He found she spoke French with grace and ease, and she discovering he knew many of her friends in distant New Orleans, the acquaintance of the Hastings ball grew to something warmer. Was it anything more? Kerry had never asked herself this question; she felt proud and pleased that Mr. Hatham should find pleasure in her society, and looking forward to the occasion of their meeting, showed by a warm pressure of her hand, and a welcoming smile her genuine enjoyment in his society. With the happy thoughtlessness of youth, she forgot that the dinners, picture exhibitions, theatre parties, rides, etc., would ever cease; that she would be obliged to return home, and that Mr. Hatham would, in all probability, walk out of her life unconscious and uncaring of the effect his absence might produce.

But one day, in the spring, the moment of awakening came, followed by such sorrows and bitter disappointments as did then seem to darken her bright young life. Kerry went for a walk in the Park that morning instead of a ride. As she moved rapidly along in the sunshine under a blue sky, full of promise of friendly balmy days to come, her spirits rose as the color did to her cheeks, and from pure joy she hummed a bit of a song under her breath. A quick trot of horses' feet in the bridle path caused her to turn involuntarily and recognize Mr. Hatham, who dismounted quickly. He gave her a gay good-morning, and begged her acceptance of a cluster of crisply yellow jonquils he held in one hand.

"They are my favorites," she answered, with her thanks, "and these have a good, pure, clean odor one rarely finds in the other hot-house flowers." When they reached the Park gates to the street, and halted to say good-by, he threw the reins over his horse's head, laughed slightly as though recollecting the fact for the first time, and said half gaily, "I forgot to tell

KERRY'S ANSWER.

you that this may be adieu for some time, as I intend going West in a day or two."

"Yes!" answered Kerry. She started, grew pale, then colored furiously, but said nothing more. He held out his hand, she laid hers in it, there was silence for a moment, then Richard turned away coldly, lifted his hat, sprang to his saddle, and rode rapidly without another word in the direction of down town. Kerry stood quite still where he left her, staring with fading color at his figure disappearing among the long lines of vehicles surging back and forth on the wide thoroughfare. Suddenly she recollected herself and turned mechanically, crossed the open square, and walked like one in a dream down the street which she had that very morning, but an hour back, trod so lightly.

"Going away to the West, very soon. Where? To San Francisco, perhaps. To the West. To the West; going away," was all she was able to think at first, and then like a shock she remembered she had expressed no slightest regret at his departure; had let him go without a word to show even in a vague way how empty his absence would make her life. "Oh, why had she been so stupid! Could she not call him back to explain?" and a foolish hope shot across her mind like a gleam of light and then faded, "no, it would be impossible," and her heart sank. But Kerry was proud, and as unbidden tears of anger and disappointment sprang to her eyes, she winked them back bravely. "Why should I care," she thought; "what difference can his going or coming make to me? I don't love him, and he only likes me; he doesn't care any more than I do," and she gave the bell an angry jerk. The well-bred butler answered her ring; and, as she climbed to her room and took off coat and hat, her eyes fell on the jonquils he had given her. Who can tell what will upset the equanimity of a young woman; certainly Kerry would never have admitted it was the sight of those yellow flowers that caused the lump in her throat to grow so big. But with a passionate gesture she swept the blossoms to the floor, and throwing herself face downwards on the broad divan lay quite silent, till the maid peeped softly through the door to announce luncheon.

"If you please, Marie, tell Aunt Forrest I've a headache, and prefer to remain quiet," answered Kerry in a broken voice from her retreat among the pillows. But greatly to her annoyance Aunt Forrest appeared to enquire with unusual tenderness and solicitude after her niece's condition. She insisted that the poor child should put on a wrapper, and at least take one small cup of tea. Kerry unlike herself received these advances with sullen obstinacy, declining all comforts till something in her aunt's voice roused her curiosity; and, turning suddenly, she saw on Mrs. Forrest's usually rosy smiling countenance traces of tears. Instantly her own sorrow was forgotten.

"Why, Auntie, dear, what is the matter? Forgive my bad temper and tell me if I can help you. Why do you cry so, has anything happened?"—kneeling down and putting both arms about the plump, kindly old lady.

"My dear child," sobbed Mrs. Forrest, "I may as well tell you your dear father died last night, and your mother telegraphs for you at once. My poor dear little Kerry!"

* * * * *

How these first weeks of terrible grief were spent Kerry never cares to remember. There were some hideous days and nights of travel, during which she sat weeping, ever weeping behind the screen of her long veil. Then the return to the dear home she had known since babyhood, where she and her sisters and brothers had suffered many privations and short moments of unhappiness, but never known death to enter the door. And now how all was changed since that day last autumn when her friends wished her a happy winter and her father kissed her so tenderly at the last. The dear kind father gone, and the helpless mother unable to do aught but weep bitterly. Yet the shock and grief seemed to awaken in Kerry all the strength and sweetness of her hitherto undeveloped character. She lifted all cares from her mother's tired, trembling shoulders, comforted the children and set herself with a will to solving the great question of their support. Her father's death left the family well nigh penniless, his comfortable salary, their

only income, expired with him, so Kerry bent her energies to the work not only of cheering but providing for her family. The older boys were struggling on small wages in humble positions; so after much self communion, many long talks with her father's former partner, Mr. Temnel, and a deal of mysterious scribbling by lamplight, Kerry announced one morning that she hoped to show the family the result of her efforts in the Sunday's paper. The boys laughed and her mother's face showed no hope, but Kerry was gratified and triumphant over the appearance of her modest article. Through this medium she gained her independence and—salary.

But had she forgotten her pleasant acquaintance of the winter, the rides in the Park and the cluster of jonquils? Sometimes after a long day's work, while the hot sun glared on the white pavements and the city wore a look of summer dreariness and desertion, Kerry would drop her busy pen, lean her elbows on the littered desk, and let her mind wander back to the bright winter days when care and sorrow had seemed almost afraid to touch her, and love and happiness supreme were hers. But now it is so different. How had she ever been gay and thoughtless? Suppose Richard would come back, would he find her changed from a girl to a woman? Would he like the serious, half-pained look in the once frank bright eyes and the faint lines about the mouth? Would he look at her as he did that day they met in the picture gallery of the museum, or when he gave her the jonquils? But he would never see her again, he had quite forgotten little Miss Balfour, Kerry would remind herself as the hot tears rose to her eyes; he is rich and powerful, while I am only a miserable little woman reporter. It is wrong of me to even think of him, and she would turn resolutely to her work.

But she did think of him despite her noble determination. The thought of him interfered in her working hours, and followed her to bed, where she lay panting during the dry, hot nights, hiding bitter tears of genuine heart's sickness on the cool pillow. She was too proud to mention his name in letters to her aunt, but waited with chilled hope for some

scrap of news sure to be dropped by that loquacious lady in the chat of society, with which she filled her weekly epistles. For a time Kerry heard nothing, until one day in the latter part of August Mrs. Forrest mentioned having met Mr. Hatham at Bar Harbor.

"He has just returned from the West," she wrote, "and is I am sure engaged to Miss Grayburn, for, altho' it is not yet made public, his intentions are very patent to outsiders, and she denies nothing."

Poor Kerry! she insisted it was only heat and hard work that caused her pale cheeks and listless step. "In the Autumn I will brace up," was the answer she gave her anxious mother, but in her heart she knew better, for Kerry was fighting alone one of the fiercest battles of life and hiding her tears as best she might from curious eyes, saying to herself the while that in time she would be better and forget.

When October came the kindly disposed editor, marking Kerry's white face and nervous manner, decided that she deserved a week's vacation. She gladly accepted his offer and arranged to go out to the country and spend her week with a cousin. The quiet days on the sugar plantation would give relief.

"I don't know what you will say, my dear, when you hear that Fred has invited two of his shooting friends to dinner," remarked Mrs. Terryl, the day of Kerry's arrival at the country home. "I begged him to wait till to-morrow, knowing you would be tired after your journey and not anxious to meet strangers, but they are a couple of Northern friends here for only a day or two and I could not refuse, but you need not talk to these stupid men and can go to your room whenever you have a mind to. I have promised your mother to return you at the end of the week greatly improved, and as strangers do not figure in my prescription for your cure, I'll see they don't worry you," added Mrs. Terryl, kissing the girl affectionately before leaving her to dress for dinner.

With listless indifference as to who the unwelcomed diners might be, Kerry arrayed herself in a pretty black lace gown—a relic of the past winter's grandeur, twisted her hair in a soft knot at

the back of her neck, surveyed herself with some satisfaction in the glass and then slowly descended the stairs. She slipped into the comfortable family drawing-room where all was yet dark except for the light shed by a bright little wood fire lit to drive off a possible chill in the air. Her cousin Fred Terryl was chatting animatedly with his two friends, the hunters.

"Ah, Kerry, my dear!" cried the amiable Fred, "is that you: Mr. Bryant and Mr. Hatham, Miss Balfour."

How thankful Kerry was for the shadow in which she stood, for she felt herself grow very white as Fred made the introduction and unseen by the others grasped a chair to steady herself. At this juncture Mrs. Terryl advanced to the dining-room door and begged that they would follow her at once.

There was a good deal of conversation during the simple courses of the dinner, in which Kerry took little or no part for it ran upon dogs, shooting, etc., and knowing nothing of such matters, she held her peace and ate her dinner as best she might, for a wildly beating heart seemed almost to choke her.

"Would he go away to-morrow and never speak to her?" She dared not raise her eyes to his face, but felt he was looking at her, and burning blushes rose to her cheeks. Fred proposed that they should make a trip to his sugar house after dinner to see the grinding and boiling by lamp light, and after a short demur, Kerry promised to accompany them. They drove over the silent dark plantation fields to where the great old-fashioned brick building remained, its exterior unaltered, although inside the picturesque methods of sugar making were substituted by a spick span new refining apparatus.

"Let us watch the men at the cane shed," said Richard, addressing Kerry directly for the first time that evening; "they interest me much more than all this machinery; will you come?" he added in a low voice, as he noted her nervous hes-

itation. She put her hand in his arm and stepped out on the little balcony to watch the strange scene and listen to the chanting voices.

After a moment he turned to her with a grave face and said: "I cannot tell you how sorry I was to hear of your loss." There was a sputter in the lamp and the flame went out leaving the two in silent darkness. "I should have written to express my sympathy, but—"

"Yes! yes!" she interrupted hastily, with a little break in her voice, "please don't speak of it, but," with a brave effort at a cheerful tone, "let me congratulate you, I think Miss Grayburn charming, and so clever."

"Miss Grayburn," repeated Richard, in a puzzled tone, "who said I was engaged to Miss Grayburn?"

"Then you do not love her?" inquired Kerry, an uncontrollable sob of joy overmastering her.

"No, and never did," was the quick rejoinder, "but, Kerry, dear Kerry, why do you cry so?" finding her hands and speaking very softly, "is it possible my cruel little girl that you care, and I was wrong after all?"

"Don't!" she gasped through her tears, "you don't know how poor I am; you must marry some one much cleverer and richer than I am, and—and—" But some one had put two strong arms about her, her tears were falling on a broad shoulder and some one was calling her tender names and kissing the soft brown hair, and Kerry was not resisting.

"It has been a terrible mistake," he explained, "I thought to see if you cared for me the morning we parted in the Park. I was a fool to mistake your silence for indifference, but went away in despair to try and forget you and was very miserable with it all. But now—"

"Ah, Hatham, you and Kerry still watching the cane shed. It is high time we were on our way home; the little girl must be tired," calls Fred's cheerful voice through the window.



\$5,000 FOR A WIFE.

By the Author of "Wedded to Misery."

XI.

THE sudden death of Mr. Blount brought a troupe of visitors to Tally ho—distant relatives in near mourning, whom Mrs. Tremaine received with rather frigid courtesy.

The brilliant young housekeeper oversaw the obsequies herself, to the intense disgust of the male relatives who thought that all these mourning cards "and this gates ajar business" quite unnecessary.

Mrs. Tremaine herself, was in black—double edged—and behind her long nun's veil she smiled when one after the other returned to Tally-ho after the long service in Grace Church, and the longer ride to Woodlawn.

"I suppose you know all about Mr. Blount's affairs?" said a keen little woman, who had scorned the garb of sorrow and was there for strict business. "Did he make a will?"

Mrs. Tremaine drew herself up coldly. "How can you ask?" she said severely. "How can you—think of such a thing now?"

"Simply because Mr. Brown is fussing around in the office," was the curt reply, "and I suppose he has something to say. You are not a relative, and of *course* you are not so much interested.

"No," said Mrs. Tremaine slowly, "I am not related to Mr. Blount, as you say."

Something in her voice made the would-be heiress look at her sharply, and wondered if that old fool had left anything to this giddy widow.

"There is Mr. Brown now!" she said quickly.

The lawyer had come in with a bundle of papers in his hand. He glanced at Mrs. Tremaine, who was still wearing her black bonnet and veil, and who carried in one hand a spray of delicate funeral flowers. "If you are willing, Mrs. Tremaine,"—he said hesitatingly.

She bowed.

"Everyone is so anxious," she said with

a peculiar curl of the lip. "We may as well settle the matter now, I suppose."

"As to that, madam," said the tart little heiress at-law, "I don't know as you have anything to say. The *family* is waiting in the other room, Mr. Brown. If you have any announcements to make I should think they might be made there. I don't know as it is necessary for Mrs. Tremaine to be present," she added spitefully, as the housekeeper moved toward the library door.

Mr. Brown pulled his moustache. "I have—ahem!—something to say that concerns Mrs. Tremaine," he said awkwardly.

Mrs. Tremaine sighed like one too deeply grieved to resent an insult.

"Poor Mr. Blount!" she said in a broken voice. "It is shocking to see how these vultures can prey upon him when his body is not yet cold."

The avaricious relative sniffed the air, and Mr. Brown ran over his papers somewhat nervously.

"There will be the deuce to pay!" he said to himself, but Mrs. Tremaine moved away quietly and slipped behind the portière of the library, where she stood with her veil drawn over her face in sorrow-stricken seclusion.

Mr. Brown entered the room with the air of an executioner. There were at least fifteen persons in the library, and all were talking rapidly, but an expectant hush fell upon the company as the lawyer entered.

He cleared his throat and all eyes were fixed upon him—except Mrs. Tremaine's.

"I desire to say," he began, "that I am not very well informed as to Mr. Blount's affairs."

A sigh of disappointment fluttered about the room.

"But my partner, Mr. Binney," he continued, "is wholly conversant with our late friend's business. Mr. Binney, unfortunately, is now in Europe. Mr. Blount's sudden death has made it impossible for me to communicate with him

at length in regard to the administration of the estate. But—" he paused and looked around the room.

A breathless silence held them all in its spell.

"I have had a cable telegram from Mr. Binney," the lawyer went on, "and he advises me that there is a will."

A rustle of agitated suspense went around the room.

"In whose favor?" said the sharp little heiress at-law.

"I am not at liberty to say," said Mr. Brown quietly. "But I have another item of information to communicate which bears directly upon the subject of Mr. Blount's property."

He cleared his throat and glanced at Mrs. Tremaine, but she had drawn her veil tightly about her face and not a feature was visible.

"We all know that the late Mr. Blount was somewhat peculiar in certain respects," he said, hesitatingly. "Not that in this matter he demonstrated any special idiosyncrasy, except as to his rather unusual silence upon a point for which there does not seem to have been any adequate cause for secrecy. The point is that within a few months of his death Mr. Blount went back on his old record, and embraced the state of matrimony."

A sharp cry burst from the lips of every listener present.

"Whom did he marry?" shrieked the little woman in quest of a legacy. "Not that bold-faced housekeeper, I hope?"

"He married Mrs. Tremaine," said Mr. Brown, quietly. "I have here the certificate of marriage, which, of course, in any disposal of the property entitles Mrs. Tremaine to at least one-third of it."

"Oh!" said the disappointed fortune-hunter. "She has got it all, no doubt! The designing thing! I suppose Blount was fool enough to leave every penny to her."

"As to that I cannot say," said the lawyer, evasively.

Everybody had risen by this time, and the room was filled with the buzz of excited conversation.

"She's a deep one!" said one. "I always knew it! I said from the first she was after Blount's money."

"The old fool!" said another. "What did he want to marry for—at his age? Ridiculous!"

"She's nothing but a servant!" snapped somebody else. "It is disgraceful."

Angry sharp words were uttered on all sides. It was taken for granted that the will which Mr. Binney had charge of was in favor of the new Mrs. Blount.

No one spoke to her, but after freely airing their views for her benefit, one by one the dissatisfied mourners (?) withdrew.

"Why didn't they tell us at first!" said the last one, angrily. "If I'd known this I wouldn't have come down. Catch me!"

Mr. Brown turned to Mrs. Tremaine and addressed her by her new name.

"They are not very well pleased with you, Mrs. Blount," he said, smiling faintly.

"It seems not," she replied with a slight shiver. "Is it not horrible? It is almost a misfortune to be rich, I think. Fancy all those people waiting to prey upon one's money!"

"Oh, I am used to that," said Mr. Brown. "In our profession we see nothing else. I should be rather surprised if it were otherwise."

He buttoned up his coat to go.

"Good-by, Mrs. Blount," he said, holding out his hand. "You have lost a generous friend in the death of your husband, but you are young and you command a large fortune. I trust you may live long to enjoy it."

She bowed and murmured a few words of acknowledgment; but Mr. Brown had hardly left the house till she sat down in a chair and burst out laughing.

"Mrs. Blount has the best of it," she said. "Mrs. Blount, I congratulate you!"

She nodded to her own image in the pier glass, and laughed and laughed again.

XII.

The carriage in which Geoffrey Taunton had taken his seat alongside of Antoinette that night after the opera, went rolling out Fifth avenue at a sleepy rate which was rather too much for Mrs. Eyre at that late hour.

"Your mamma is fast asleep," Taunton observed. "Shall we take the long

way? I am quite sure she won't mind it." "Very well," Antoinette assented. "I should like it. I am always so wide-awake after the opera. It takes me all night to get quieted down."

"Is that all?" said Taunton in a low tone. "I should be so proud if you cared just to be with me."

Antoinette was silent.

"I do not understand the success of some men with the gentler sex," he went on. "Now there is Llewellyn. You saw him to-night at the opera, I suppose?"

"No! Was he there?"

"He had that irrepressible Miss Crawford. You know she is the biggest flirt in New York. But Llewellyn gets on with her famously. I stumbled over them by the merest accident in the foyer, and Llewellyn was wrapping her up in her opera cloak—upon my word! He all but had her in his arms," Taunton concluded, laughing.

"And I suppose she quite enjoyed it," Antoinette observed, leaning back against the cushions.

"They both seemed to like it—in fact, there is two to one at the club that Llewellyn marries Belle Crawford."

"Is there? Does Mr. Llewellyn allow that sort of thing?"

Taunton laughed.

"He can't stop it. Besides, I am afraid you don't know Llewellyn. Old Crawford, you know, is worth two million."

"How lovely the electric light is on the snow!" Antoinette remarked irrelevantly.

"It is awfully pretty out at Bonny-brae. The trees, you know, and the little waterfall down in the gully."

"Yes, I know," said Antoinette, with a suppressed sigh. "Dear old Bonny-brae."

"Are you homesick for the place?" said Taunton, quickly. "Antoinette! Come back to it as my wife. I love you. Will you consent to marry me? Bonny-brae shall be yours, and I will do my best to make you happy."

He leaned forward eagerly, and took her little gloved hand in his. Taunton was a handsome fellow, in his way, and Antoinette had a woman's heart that somehow felt piqued and sore.

"I am afraid," she faltered, nervously.

"You do not love me?" said Taunton quickly. "But I will not hurry you, Antoinette. Only say you will marry me some day, and I will wait for you; I will not urge you."

"But I do not know," she said, doubtfully. "I am not quite sure of myself."

"Why need you fear?" he whispered tenderly. "I will not compel you to anything. Your future is safe with me. Say yes, Antoinette—do say yes!"

Antoinette looked at her mother. She was sleeping heavily. She thought of her father, of Llewellyn, of herself.

"Why not?" she asked herself recklessly, and she turned to Taunton with a smile.

"Well!" she said, with some attempt at coquetry. "I suppose you will have your own way."

Taunton's arm slipped around her and he drew her to him.

"No, no! not now!" she cried, half in terror. "Forgive me! But I—I—cannot."

Taunton released her at once.

"It shall be as you say!" he replied. "Don't tremble so, Antoinette. I will not hurt you. There! I will not even touch your hand, if you say so."

"I am foolish, I know!" she said, apologetically, "but no man living has ever kissed me, and I—I somehow cannot help feeling —"

"You are a rare exception in that respect," said Taunton, with a slight curl of his lip, which Antoinette did not see. "But—here we are? You will have to break the news upon your mother's dreams."

"Mamma!" Antoinette cried. "Here we are at home. Wake up—for pity's sake!"

Mrs. Eyre did not stir, and Antoinette shook her violently.

"Mamma! Mamma!" she called. "Dear me! I wonder what makes her sleep so soundly."

Taunton looked at her keenly.

"I hope I have not overdone the matter," he thought, with some anxiety, and then called aloud:

"Mrs. Eyre! Wake up!"

Mrs. Eyre opened her eyes in a sluggish manner.

"Where am I?" she asked, looking about stupidly.

"Home!" said Antoinette, somewhat impatiently. "Come!"

"One moment!" said Taunton in a low tone. "Before you leave me will you exchange with me?"

He pointed to her one ungloved hand on which she wore a serpent ring set with rubies. At the same time he had drawn from his own finger a superb diamond. Antoinette slipped it on with a faint smile, and gave him her ring in return.

"It is vicious," she remarked. "If you are not a good boy it will bite you."

Taunton stepped out of the carriage, and with difficulty managed to induce Mrs. Eyre to move. She seemed like one in a trance.

"Mamma! for pity's sake, look where you are going!" cried Antoinette, greatly annoyed, for her mother had stepped awkwardly to the pavement, and had managed to get into a little pool of slush that lay there ready to entrap the unwary. A spurt of muddy water flew over her skirts and spotted Mr. Taunton's broadcloth.

"Oh! that is too bad!" cried Antoinette; but Mrs. Eyre swayed towards her and almost fell. "Mamma! what is the matter with you?" she exclaimed, catching her mother's wrist firmly.

"She is dead tired," said Taunton, as he took out his handkerchief to remove the mud from his trousers. "Oh, don't mind me! You'd better get your mother in bed. I'm all right."

"You have dropped something," Antoinette said, as, in drawing out his handkerchief, something fell to the pavement.

It was a small vial, which broke as it struck the bricks. Taunton gave it a kick with the toe of his boot and sent the fragments into the gutter.

"It is nothing of any consequence," he said, hastily. "Good night, Mrs. Eyre! Good night," he added in a lower tone. "Good night—dearest."

Mrs. Eyre was too dull to return his salute. Antoinette barely got her into the house safely, while Taunton re-entered the carriage and drove rapidly away.

XIII.

It was past three o'clock in the morning when Taunton reached the lodge-gate at Bonnybrae. He had stopped on the way and had a bottle of wine at Volney's, which left him in a state of decided exhilaration.

"Well!" he said to himself as he glanced down at the ruby serpent, whose jeweled eyes glistened in the gaslight. "Thus far, I have the best of Llewellyn, anyhow."

The carriage stopped. He did not wait for the coachman to open the door, and it was well he didn't, for the poor fellow, worn out with late hours, was fast asleep. The horses had brought him home by their own wit.

Taunton sprang out without thinking, but his foot had no sooner touched the flags than he felt a firm grip upon his arm and a voice in his ear said sternly:

"One moment, if you please!"

The two gas lamps that guarded the carriage-way shone full upon the face of his *vis-à-vis*. Taunton shrank back with a cowardly feeling when he saw that it was Llewellyn.

"Oh!" he exclaimed with affected nonchalance. "Is it you?"

Llewellyn was trembling with suppressed excitement.

"Taunton!" he said shortly. "You have broken your agreement. I saw you with Miss Eyre to-night."

"Ah?" said Taunton coolly. "You take the trouble to watch me then?"

"No! But—you have forfeited the five thousand dollars I paid you. Where is the money?"

Taunton gave his right cheek a significant tap and pointed up in the air.

"Up the spout!" he answered dryly.

"I sold my Y. and C. this morning."

"And you have stolen my money to cover your losses!" said Llewellyn angrily.

"Cover the deuce!" was Taunton's reckless reply. "Yes! I used the money. What else could you expect? You're a precious greeny, Llewellyn, if you thought I'd put it by for a nest-egg. Come now! Don't fly up! I don't mean to keep the money. I'll pay it back some day."

"Well, I rather guess you will, and that pretty quick, unless—you still have

some idea of sticking to your agreement?"

Angry as he was, he was still anxious to bind Taunton by his agreement.

"My dear fellow," said Taunton insolently, "I can't do it. I promised more than it was in my power to perform."

He stood there with his gloves in his hand toying with the superb ring. Llewellyn knew the jewel perfectly well. Antoinette always wore it on her left hand.

"Every man can keep his word!" he said sternly.

"But you see matters had already gone further than I supposed. It has been my fortune to win Miss Eyre's affection already, and the affair has gone too far for me to turn back. The fact is, Llewellyn, —I may as well tell you!—Miss Eyre and I are engaged."

Llewellyn's face grew perfectly livid.

"Taunton!" he cried hoarsely, "you are a scoundrel and a thief!"

His loud voice awakened the man on the box, who rubbed his eyes and stared stupidly at the two men. Then a cry of "help!" burst from his lips, for Llewellyn had struck Taunton a blow that knocked him across the driveway almost under the horses' feet.

Taunton's head struck on the flags. He lay there in a pool of blood, silent and insensible.

"Help! Murder!" shouted the coachman, who was wide awake now and overcome with stupid horror. The windows and doors flew open in response to his cries. Four or five men came running into the grounds, and the coachman kept gesticulating and shouting wildly:

"There he is! There is the man who struck Mr. Taunton!"

A heavy hand was laid on Llewellyn's shoulders.

"You are my prisoner!" said a voice in his ear, and Llewellyn realized for the first time how grave was his offense.

"Take your hands off me!" he said angrily. "Yes! I struck him; but I had a right to strike him. If you arrest me, you shall suffer for it!"

"That shall be for the Court to decide," said the officer in a manner as quiet as Llewellyn's was excited. "You must come with me."

Taunton meanwhile, was lifted up and carried into the house, while someone went for a doctor.

"It will be lucky for you if he don't die," observed the officer as he opened the door of Taunton's carriage. "Come, get in! If you behave like a gentleman, I won't handcuff you, but the moment you begin to cut up any didos, you will have to have the nippers on!"

Llewellyn groaned; but he entered the carriage quietly.

"This is a most monstrous piece of injustice!" he protested.

"You will have a hearing. Don't be afraid!" was the cool reply, and he was obliged to sit there while the carriage was driven to the Central Station.

The balance of the night Llewellyn spent in jail. Everything upon his person was taken from him by his jailer.

"Be careful of those papers," he said as he unwillingly yielded up the contents of his vest pocket. "They are very valuable."

A man who was in the cell opposite, turned sharply and eyed the flat wallet that had just passed into the jailer's hands. He was a dark, foreign-looking man, who had been pacing excitedly up and down his cell, but who now paused with a smile of derision as Llewellyn protested to the jailer against the outrages that were being committed upon him.

"Save your breath, *señor*!" he called across the corridor, while his thin, red lips and long black beard contrasted strikingly with a set of white lupine teeth. "Just one hour ago, I was arrested—for what, think you? For *being a suspicious character*! Bah! To the devil with this free country of yours! A man cannot walk about after midnight without somebody suspects him, and then—*tomas sentido*! you are arrested and thrown into jail, and there you rot, for all I know."

"No. 37!" said the jailer, "shut up!"

The Spaniard shrugged his shoulders and muttered something under his breath.

Llewellyn was presently left alone and the door was locked upon him.

The Spaniard kissed his hand mockingly to the jailer.

"How do you like it, *Señor*?" he called to Llewellyn, but there was no re-

ply. Llewellyn had thrown himself on his cot, and was angrily brooding over his fate.

In the morning, his Spanish comrade was released, there being no charge against him of sufficient gravity to warrant his detention.

"You will get me my valuables now!" he said pompously, as he followed the jailer into a room where the property of the prisoners was kept under lock and key.

"You hadn't much about you, if I remember rightly," said the jailer, regarding him with some amusement. "There was an empty pocket book, some cigarettes, a penknife, and—here they are!"

"Nothing about me!" cried the Spaniard in a shrill voice. "Heavenly Angels! Where are my papers—my valuable papers, and the wallet I had in my vest pocket?"

"Oh, come off—won't you?" said the jailer. "That's all you had."

"Swindler!" shrieked the Spaniard. "Give me my papers! There they are! There they are! There they are on that shelf. Give them to me!"

"Those belong to No. 38," said the jailer positively. "They are ticketed with his things."

The Spaniard stamped his foot.

"Miserable man!" he shouted. "This is some more of your wretched American law! Those papers are mine. I am a lawyer. Those papers concern my business."

The jailer took up the wallet containing the papers in question and opened it. Could he have made a mistake? He did not really remember whether this wallet belonged to No. 37 or No. 38. Moreover, the papers inside were of a miscellaneous character, such as might have belonged to anyone.

"Well!" he said. "Prove your property and you shall have it."

The Spaniard's eyes glittered.

"Get out!" he cried, giving him a shove.

"Here! None of that!" said the jailer sharply; but when he recovered his equilibrium, he was standing opposite to a small mirror, where the young men in the office were wont to beautify themselves.

The Spaniard had sharp eyes, and he

could look right over the jailer's shoulder into the glass.

"Run them over!" he said carelessly. "I will tell you each one as you come to it."

The jailer held the wallet perpendicularly, thinking he could conceal the contents, but succeeded only in exposing them more plainly in the glass.

"First, a letter in a yellow envelope," said the Spaniard, glibly. "Then two papers fastened together with a rubber band; then a certificate of stock; a scrap of newspaper; a blue envelope; a blank. 'Here's your wallet,' said the jailer, passing it to him. 'That's all, I suppose!'"

"Yes!" said the Spaniard, pocketing the wallet which belonged to Leigh Llewellyn, and in five minutes he had vanished around the corner.

XIV.

Happily for Llewellyn, Taunton was neither dead nor dangerously wounded. The fall on the flags had stunned him, and he had a bad cut back of his left ear, but in a few days he was going about none the worse of it save for a headache and a necessity for bandages.

One week after the injury, he was sitting in the library at Bonny-brae, writing replies to a host of unanswered letters which lay upon the table.

"Bascomb grows impertinent!" he remarked, tossing from him a letter he had just re-read. "Well! This cut on my head is a good subterfuge. It explains all delays. Llewellyn did not know he was doing me a service when he carved me up in this fashion."

He leaned back, and filled a large meerschaum from a bronze jar full of Turkish tobacco.

"But he will not be so free with his blows after this," he added, rubbing his head tenderly. "To be sent up for three months is not a pleasant episode in the life of a society man."

He laughed to himself and struck a match. Clouds of fragrant smoke had begun to rise when the door opened, and a servant said doubtfully:

"A—a man wants to see you, sir?"

"What kind of a man?" said Taunton, sharply.

"I—I can't tell what kind of a man he is, sir," said the servant, hesitating. "He has a black beard, he wears a cloak, and talks kind of queer."

"What name?"

"He wrote it here, sir."

Taunton scanned the card.

"Edouardo Guimares!" he repeated.

"Who the deuce is he? Show him in, John. I'll see him here."

It was the mysterious Spaniard, Mrs. Tremaine's so-called brother, who entered the room. At the sight of him, Taunton changed color.

"Velasquez!" he cried. "In the name of all that is evil, where did you come from?"

"I have been spending the winter in the South," said the Spaniard, airily. "It is some time since we have met, Tremaine?"

"Hush—for Heaven's sake!" cried Taunton, in terror. "Not that name, here! Velasquez, what evil spirit brought you—"

"My name is Guimares," he said, with a laugh. "I, too, have been born again."

"What are you doing here?" Taunton asked, uneasily.

"I came to see you, and—my sister."

"Nana must have been glad to see you!"

"Like yourself. You haven't any cigarettes, have you?"

"No; help yourself," he said, passing his best Havanas.

"What I came to see you about," said the Spaniard, lighting his cigar, "is a financial matter. I am badly in need of money."

"You generally were when I knew you," said Taunton, caustically.

"Oh, don't be alarmed! I have not come to beg or borrow. I have two papers in my possession which I wish to make some money out of."

"Well?"

"I want you to buy them."

"I!" exclaimed Taunton. "What are they, pray?"

"Your marriage certificate and —"

"Oh," said Taunton, carelessly, "that is not worth a sou to me. Nana is married you know. It has all come out since Blount's death, and she is not all likely to publish her marriage with me, if she

could make anything out of it, which I doubt."

The Spaniard laughed in a peculiar way.

"Very well, then," he said, indifferently. "It is all one to me. Since Nana is a rich woman now, and," he added in a shrewd way, "since I have discovered that your marriage with her was after all a binding one —"

"What?" exclaimed Taunton, springing half out of his chair. "You are certainly lying, Guimares!"

"Not at all. You were too hasty. You did not inquire into all the points of law. Bansaheira of Oporto looked into the matter for me, and Nana is your wife as certainly as the Roman Church can make her."

"Bah!" said Taunton, derisively.

The Spaniard's eyes fired suddenly.

"We will see, then!" he said. "It might be inconvenient if you wished to marry yourself, and it should be shown that —"

Taunton moved uneasily in his chair.

"You said you had two papers," he interrupted. "What is the other?"

"Something you may care more about. It is rather a curious paper—by the way, an agreement made in consideration of the payment of five thousand dollars by a man named Llewellyn —"

"Have you that paper?" cried Taunton, eagerly. "Show it to me. Where did you get it?"

"It came into my hands by accident," said the Spaniard carelessly, as he drew from his vest pocket the paper in question, and held it up where Taunton could see, but not touch, it.

"Guimares!" Taunton cried breathlessly, "you beat anything I ever saw."

The Spaniard smiled, folded up the paper and put it back in his pocket.

Taunton was silent a moment. Then he said slowly:

"What will you take for—for the two papers?"

"Fifteen hundred dollars."

"Good heavens! You are mad."

"I have named my price."

"It is too high. I cannot pay it. I—I am a little short of money just now, and —"

"Ah!" said the Spaniard, mockingly.

"What will you take for the agreement?"

"One thousand dollars separately."

"Come now, Guimares! Be reasonable."

"Mr. Llewellyn will probably buy the certificate for twice the sum I named."

Taunton turned livid.

"And I will have you arrested for blackmail!" he cried, angrily.

"Bah!" said the Spaniard in his turn.

Taunton began to pace up and down the room.

"Well, I'll tell you what I'll do," he said, presently. "If you give me a week —"

"You want—what is it you call it here?" said the Spaniard with his perennial smile.

"You want an—an option. Very well I am not so badly off but I can give you a week"

Taunton drew a deep breath.

"I will see you then," he said, shortly, "but, in the meantime, keep out of my road. You—you remind me of too much that is disagreeable."

The Spaniard showed his white wolf-teeth in an ugly grimace.

"Adios!" he said, waving his hand, "till next week."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]





Two Eavesdroppers.

FRANCES BURTON CLARE.

IT was a glorious afternoon in July, bright and warm.

A south wind blew across Lake Ontario, and freed by the greedily-absorbent waters from the impurities with which thickly-populated cities had charged its breath, it reached the northern shore delightfully pure and cool.

The water-line—a marvel of curves—was beaten back in places by “cribs,” thrown out to protect the land by meeting and repelling its restless foe.

One of these rude breakwaters, half demolished by violent storms, lay now high on the beach, with only its outer half touched by the small waves.

They gurgled and danced about its worn beams, leaping in through the storm-widened crevices, then rushing back to overtake their less troublesome companions.

Stretched at full length, with his head towards shore, held from too close contact with the pebbles by his clasped hands, sheltered from observation by the three beams which formed the crib’s side, with his brown eyes resting on the dancing waters—behold Douglas McDonald.

A man of past thirty, with a full brown beard, a thick moustache, a complexion turned to a foreign hue by exposure to Old Sol’s caresses, he looked very handsome and very happy, as he lay there with a smile arching his lips, and disturbing the dark moustaches from their usual resting place.

Suddenly the sound of moving pebbles assured him that some one was approaching, and almost at the same moment he heard his sister’s voice, addressing her young friend, who was boarding at the same house, in the little town where they were spending the summer months.

“Now tell me honestly, Mattie, if you like Douglas. Dear old boy, it seems so nice to have him around after being away so many years, only”—with a sigh—“I wish he were married.”

“And I suppose,” returned Mattie Morton, “that you will ask your dear husband to find out from your brother his opinion of me, and then what fun you and Jack will have comparing notes.”

A little pause, during which the ladies seat themselves near the crib, and the subject of conversation mutters, “What on earth shall I do, discover myself to them or go to sleep and not listen;” deciding finally that his appearance at so inopportune a time would cause more annoyance than his eavesdropping could. Again Mattie’s low voice reached him, and instead of sleeping, he listened very eagerly, for what man would not wish to hear a conversation in which the woman he was half in love with might be expected to confess her feeling to his sister. But if Douglas McDonald listened for a tender confession, he was disappointed, for half-laughing she exclaimed, “I don’t think he is handsome, Bella.”

“The mischief you don’t said the listener, with a smile, while unsuspecting Mattie rattled on, “He is not my ideal, at all. His hair is too long, and he has too much beard, and, dear me, Bella, why doesn’t he straighten his shoulders and wear becoming ties?”

“My hair is rather long,” admitted the distressed listener to himself, as he drew a lock through his fingers. “But, my dear Miss Mattie, a man grows very neglectful of his personal appearance when he travels in countries but half-civilized. I look decidedly better than many Turks I’ve seen, at any rate.”

“Is that the boat, Mattie?” asked Bella, straining her eyes to obtain a better view of a streak of smoke in the distance.

“I believe it is,” replied her companion.

“Let us go up and dress in time to meet Jack on the dock,” went on the young wife; and Mattie assenting, they walked up the beach, and following the road up the hill, were soon lost to sight.

Douglas cautiously waited until he thought they should have left the house, and then rising, prepared to go up, saying as he stretched himself, “Ah, Douglas, my boy, you must improve, if you are to be pleasing to the fair Mattie.”

“I always had an idea,” he continued, stroking the brown beard in a meditative manner, “that women liked this kind of

thing ;" then as a bright look succeeded the thoughtful one, he added, "I think I shall go some place else to spend my holidays."

When Mrs. Morton and Bella, accompanied by Mr. Jack Sterling reached the house, Douglas, dressed for dinner, was busily engaged with a new magazine, and answered his brother-in-law's query, "What have you been doing all day, Douglas?" with a careless "Sunning myself and building Spanish castles, my boy; and by the way, Jack, I must go to the city to-morrow; will you please see that I am properly waked up in time to catch your boat."

Jack promised, while Bella protested her unbelief in the existence of the business which her brother asserted called him away on the morrow.

The evening passed pleasantly, Douglas making himself so agreeable to Mattie that she felt almost inclined to like him, in spite of the obnoxious beard.

The following day, at the time Bella began to expect Douglas, who had promised to come out from the city early, a telegram was put into her hand, which acquainted her with the fact that her brother had found affairs so combined, as to render his absence for some time a matter of necessity, though he assured her he would come as soon as he could—perhaps in less than a week.

Jack came duly by the evening boat, and declared that he would "take his holidays now."

"Oh, dear," urged Bella, "can't you wait till Douglas comes back?"

"No," answered Jack shortly, "it was all arranged this morning, and I told him of it. He needn't have gone off in such a hurry."

"Business before pleasure, or" began Mattie, civility—suggested Jack, who seemed to be in no very benign frame of mind.

"No, scarcely that," she laughed as she pulled aside the curtain, and admitted the silvery light from the crescent moon; but her sentence remained unfinished except with a mocking shrug of her shoulders.

"I am going to bring a friend out with me," went on Jack presently. Bella looked distressed. It was bad enough,

she thought, to have Douglas go off this way without Jack's bringing up someone who would be sure to fall in love with Mattie. The little half-woven romance seemed to be all angles now; and Bella sighed heavily.

However, being a wise little woman, she put down all useless repining, and so far thawed toward the invading stranger, as to ask "Who is it Jack? I mean what is his name?"

"I have his card here somewhere, and so will give you his name in full," the husband made reply as he took it from his pocket, and read: "Robert S. Evans," then he added hastily, "an old schoolmate," Bella, I had not seen him for years till the other day."

"He's a fine looking fellow," to Mattie, as she turned towards him with a questioning look on her face, "and I prophesy he'll fall in love with you."

"Oh, no, don't prophesy that," answered the girl who was seated at the window.

"Bella has been forecasting the future, and," with a little laugh, "Mr. McDonald and I did not travel well in friendship's road." She laid her pretty little brown-tressed head on one dainty hand, and assumed a look of mock sorrow.

Jack laughed, and they discussed picnic parties and walking expeditions for the rest of the evening.

The next night the stranger came, and the following weeks were pleasantly spent by this party of four.

They took long walks in the early morning; they read to one another in the sultry afternoons, lounging beneath the shade trees fringing the banks of the lake; they rowed on the moon-lit waters in the evenings.

All four declared it was a continual surprise to find, each day, something new to do, even in such a little town.

It became apparent to Mattie before long, that she and Mr. Evans were often a little way behind in the walks; and once when a row had been planned, Bella pleaded a headache, and Jack—sympathetic husband—remained home with her.

But one day she overheard something which very rudely awakened her to the fact that she cared more for this hand-

some man than any other she had ever met; that she loved him, and, that he was unworthy of her affection; undeserving even of her esteem.

She had gone upstairs one hot afternoon intending to dress, but finding it still a little early, came down again, and entering the cool drawing-room, proceeded to write a letter.

Mr. Evans was on on side of the piazza smoking; Jack was uptown for the mail; Bella was in her room.

Soon there was a stealthy step on the stair, and then Bella's footfall sounded down the hall, and into the dining-room, separated from the drawing-room only by portières.

A blind was cautiously opened, and a whispered "Come in here, dear, I want to talk with you," fell from Bella's lips, while Mr. Evans' smooth voice replied, "Is the coast clear?" "Entirely," returned Mrs. Jack Sterling, as she closed the blind. "Mattie is in her room. I saw her go in, and I presume she is asleep for it was all quiet, as I passed her door just now."

Then followed a low conversation, unintelligible to Mattie.

Soon, however, Mrs. Stirling's voice broke, and she sobbed out:

"Oh, this secrecy is dreadful—I can't bear to be so deceitful."

"Do you not love me well enough, Bella, to consent to this, when there is no other way?"

"We shouldn't have commenced the deception—and, oh, dear me, I can't bear it much longer."

"I will end it all soon—make a clean breast of it," went on the deep voice of Bella's companion, while Mattie—poor little Mattie pressed her hands to her side, and bending forward, with bated breath, listened.

"You must tell, or go away, or something soon," said Bella, in a firmer voice.

"Yes, I'll do it to-day," answered Mr. Evans, after a pause, then, "thank you, my dear, for your kindness in this little matter—poor little Mattie, it is rather hard on her."

There was a sound of meeting lips, and presently Bella's footstep sounded on the stairs again.

Mattie waited until Mrs. Stirling had

entered her room, and then she too ascended to her apartment, slowly and so falteringly, that more than once the banister supported her whole weight.

Once in her room, she shed the tears she had before driven back; released the sobs which struggled in her throat; muttered the stinging words "Poor little Mattie, it is rather hard on her;" laughed half-harshly as she chid herself for evincing the slightest sign by which he could fancy she cared for him; dried her eyes and then turned her attention from her own affairs, and thought of Jack. "Poor Jack!" she murmured, "and he loves and trusts her so. Bella is very wicked."

That evening all four were seated on the beach, when Bella, rising suddenly, said to Jack, "I am really chilly. Will you come up with me?"

At any other time Mattie would have discovered that the night wind was cold, but, thinking that perhaps Bella meant to confess to her husband, she honored her friend's desire to be alone with him, and bravely sat there with a man she despised—for friendship's sake.

Soon Mr. Evans drew near and attempted to cover with his, the little hand which lay so lightly in Mattie's lap; but she repelled the advance; and when in low tones he told her that he loved her, she started up and denounced him in such scathing words, that he, too, rose and demanded her reason for so upbraiding him.

"How dare you practice such deceit," she continued, for the fiery nature lashed by a feeling of personal wrong, was irresistible now. "You came here as Jack's friend. He trusted you. How could you speak of love to his—" she paused, and he smilingly added, "wife's friend."

Two angry blue eyes glared at him; an imperious gesture silenced him, as he attempted to go on, and Mattie impetuously proceeded with—"I heard you this afternoon. I know how deceitful and how wicked you have been and I—loathe you."

The fire had burned out, and it was now her listener's turn.

"Deceitful Mattie, it is true, but not wicked. I have not been wicked in the matter."

A look of utter contempt passed over

her face, but he went on: "It was foolish I know, but it was all because I loved you, Mattie."

"Because you loved me," scornfully. "You confessed your love for Belle—urged her to consent to secrecy for the sake of her love for you; and finally declared you would settle the matter soon. Do not imagine you deceive me. I heard all; and—" triumphantly, "if you do not go away from here to-morrow, I will explain matters to Jack."

"Whew!" a long-drawn whistle was the only answer. Mr. Evans' features worked convulsively. The joy got the better of the man, and the air resounded to a burst of laughter, so mirth-provoking that Mattie, though thoroughly convinced that he must be mad, could not prevent her lips from parting in a smile.

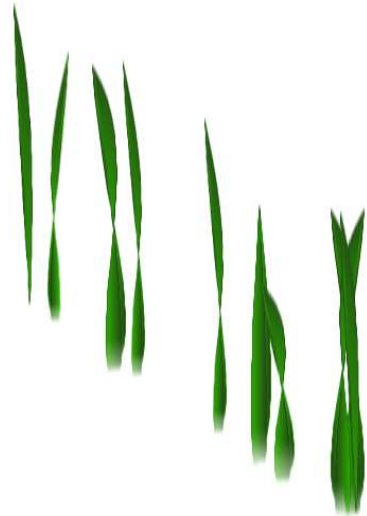
Soon, however, the grave look came into his face again, and, coming nearer, he said:

"Dear little Mattie, listen! Wait," as she drew away from him; "You are making a mistake, and so was I mistaken in your reference to this afternoon. A month ago to-day, I came to this town to visit my sister. In the afternoon, lying in yonder crib, I overheard her and her dearest friend as they criticized my personal appearance; complained of my

long hair, my overgrown beard, my unbecoming ties," and with a mischievous look in the kindly eye bent on Mattie's startled, rosy face, "I resolved to try and play a practical joke on my fair critics. I went to the city the following day, had my beard removed, my hair cut, invested in an entirely different outfit of apparel, made a wager with Jack that you would not recognize me, extorted a promise from him to help me conceal my identity for a short time, if I remained undetected in my ruse; and, with a great amount of persuasion, my dear brother-in-law induced Bella to allow you to be introduced to Jack's friend. This afternoon she declared I must tell you—and I have.

"Come, Mattie, drawing the little brown head to his shoulder, "let me finish my story, which you so indignantly interrupted a little time ago."

The story was told, the question asked, the answer given; and there in the summer dusk they sat, with the great blue tent stretched above, and the water at their feet. The little wind-chased ripples laughed on the shore, gurgled, murmured and sang in low, sweet notes a weird and fascinating melody, seeming to voice the gladness of the two who sat on the beach, happy beyond expression.



A Game For Two.

BY MRS. GEO. E. MASON.

It was a pleasant breakfast parlor. I like to introduce my characters at the breakfast table. The world seems, every morning so fresh and young, as if just made, every one is, or should be, at their best, the room the most attractive, the meal the most dainty and appetizing of all.

And this was a charming room. The walls a pale, delicate green, with sprays of apple blossoms, here and there strewn carelessly, a few good pictures, not the stereotyped fruit and game pieces, but bits of cool forest and lake scenery. Windows of a single pane of limpid plate-glass, opened to the floor, into a garden, fresh and brilliant and fragrant with flowers, and sunshine and dew. And the breakfast table was not the least attractive bit of warmth and light, and color.

The immaculately pure, exquisitely laundered damask linen, the pearly, gold-rimmed china—for it was before the days of colored china, and ugly square forms, tables looked prettier, if not quite so esthetic—the glittering silver and cut glass, the brace of birds deliciously browned, the crisp waffles, the golden butter, and amber honey, the ruby-like jelly, the coffee in the egg-shell cups, were alike attractive to the eye, and tempting to the taste of the portly, handsome, self sufficient man, who emerged from his dressing room, fresh from his morning bath and toilet.

Not so, the little lady, who sat at the head of the table. She was flushed and heated, and a slight wrinkle of worry and vexation appeared between her eyes. Attired in a plain brown gingham, clean and smooth, but not a glimpse of white collar, or thread of lace at the throat, relieved the monotony, or softened the outline, not a ringlet or ripple in the smoothness of her hair, brushed plainly back, and confined in a prim little knot at the back of her head. And this with all the capabilities of beauty, in the smooth clear complexion, the long lashes over the brilliant eyes, the small mouth and chin, the regular teeth, and the lovely curves of the neck and throat which even the prim ugly dress could not hide.

"I shall have to discharge my cook," said she. "She is getting too careless and incapable. She would have burned the birds this morning had I not been there, and the coffee would not have been fit to drink, if I had not set it off as soon as it came to a boil. She will persist in boiling it until all the flavor is gone—such incorrigible inefficiency and stupidity!"

"As you please, my dear," said he, absently, as he carved the birds. He was accustomed to these complaints, and was thinking of something else. Not another word passed between the two during the meal, with all the sights and sounds of this lovely morning around them. "Do not keep dinner waiting as you did yesterday," said she, as he stood drawing on his gloves, for the street. "Everything spoils so, by waiting."

He thought, with slight compunction of a certain charming widow, with whom he had lingered to chat on his way from uptown yesterday, and promised to then try to be more punctual.

"What a fortunate thing that wives do not know everything!" thought he, as he left the house.

As soon as he was gone, Lucy Rivers busied herself in having the house, already neat and clean as a pin, thoroughly swept from top to bottom, and then with soft silken cloth in one hand, and feather duster in the other, she went all over it and removed every speck and particle of dust. For she was a model housekeeper, and took a great deal of pride in her house, with its elegant furnishings, and complete conveniences.

She also loved her husband, her whole heart was enlisted in his comfort and happiness, never yet had he to complain of a missing shirt-button, or an ill-cooked meal, and with the best and purest of motives she was in danger of becoming a mere household drudge.

Lucy in ministering to the bodily comfort of her husband, forgot to render herself a companion. So interested was she in her house and housekeeping, in her not only appetizing, but artistic cookery, in her desire that her husband should never

feel the need of anything that her loving forethought could supply, that she did not remember that man could not live by bread alone, but that he has a social nature, a mind and heart and affections to please and gratify.

After accomplishing her morning's work to her satisfaction, she donned a brown sundown,—than which nothing is more hideous and unbecoming and started uptown on some domestic errand. Three or four blocks from home, as she was passing a house, on the street car, a handsome and attractive woman on the front porch arrested her attention.

Lucy had just thought, with her warm admiration for beauty of all kinds, "What a lovely woman! What a graceful picture! "when two young men, with the egregious folly we so often see displayed of mentioning names in public places among strangers, said:

"Mrs. Harrison is a charming widow."

"But some other women better look a little out for their husbands."

"Yes—Mrs. Rivers, for instance." And they both laughed.

Lucy, with blazing cheek, signalled the driver, and got out.

"Can it be possible?" thought she, as she proceeded in her walk up town, "that Henry does do so? And so boldly that it is a subject of public remark?"

He was punctual, however, at the dinner hour, and everything was as it always was on her part, in perfect order.

She was rather silent during the meal, but he did not notice her preoccupation, for he was thoughtful too.

She noticed that he made a careful, not to say an elaborate, toilet before he went out again and left her alone.

She sat, for an hour or two after he was gone, bolt upright, under the brilliant gaslight, engaged in her sewing. The color deepened on her cheek, the light becoming more brilliant in her eye, as she drew the crimson silk thread through her embroidery, until at length she could endure it no longer.

She dropped her work, threw a shawl over her head—it was a bright moonlight night, and the house where the widow boarded was only a few blocks away.

Yes,—there he was. As she paused in front of the house, she saw the floating

lace curtains, a merry group around the card table, and her husband there, the gayest of the gay.

So, this was the manner in which he passed his time, while she sat at home alone! She did not pause to reflect that had he remained at home, she would, probably, not have addressed a word to him during the whole evening.

She rushed home, her feet had wings as she flew upstairs to her room, and partially undressing, threw herself on the bed, in a flood of tears. Her sobs attracted the attention of her old colored nurse, that she had brought with her from the South, who sat in the adjoining room.

"What's the matter, Miss Lucy, honey?" said she, coming in, "Is you sick?"

"No, Mammy," replied she, sitting upright, and putting the damp, dishevelled hair out of her eyes. "Only sick at heart."

The old woman sat down on the side of the bed, drew her head to her lap, and began to brush her hair, with a soothing, caressing motion.

"What is it? Is it Mars Henry's doings?"

"What do you mean, Mammy?" said she, startled to find that of which she was ignorant of until now was the gossip of the servants.

"Why, his running after that woman—that widow Harrison—and she can't hold a candle to you."

"Oh, yes, Mammy," said Lucy, determined to do her justice, and remembering the picture of this morning, "she is a pretty woman."

"No such thing!" said Mammy, indignantly. "I know; I've seen her in the mornin', before she gets her paint and powder and frizzes on, in calico wrapper, and hair in curl papers—she's thirty-five, if she's a day."

"She don't look it. She looks younger than I do."

"Because she dresses gayer, with her curls and white dresses. You dress like she does, and curl your hair as you did when you was a girl, and I'll bet you is the prettiest."

"And after I had tried to be such a good wife to Henry," resumed Lucy, after a pause, her eyes filling with tears again. "Stayed at home and did my duty."

"Men is such fools," broke in Mammy, "they're always talking about a woman stayin' at home and tending to her business, but that's not the kind they like after all. They'll leave their wives at home for a flirtin', painted gadabout not half so good."

"And to think," after a pause, "what a belle you used to be, Miss Lucy! How Colonel Milligan and Judge Bland, with their shining carriages and blooded horses, used to come to see you, and the ground wasn't good enough for you to walk on, and you had the pick of the country; and to think you married Mars Henry and came way off West here and settled down to stay at home while he flirts around with other women!"

"But I was young and gay and handsome then," said Lucy, smiling at the memory of her girlish triumphs.

"No prettier than you are now," said the old woman, decidedly. "And you're not so very old yet—not twenty-five. I nussed you, and I know. Nothin' to hinder you from dressing gay like you did then, in your pretty silks, white muslins and light lawns. You're rich enough to have all the dresses you want. Now, with your ugly brown gingham and blue calico, and with your hair combed smooth, no wonder. Mars Henry—he's like all the men—he likes lively, well-dressed women! I'd show him if I was you! And I'd show her, too, that she's not the only woman that can put on style. Give them a taste of it—see how they like it!"

"I will think of 'it, Mammy," replied Lucy, upon whom the energetic words of her old nurse at length made some impression.

II.

The next morning after breakfast Lucy opened her long neglected piano, and as she sang some of her youthful songs, and her fingers, which had not lost their cunning, rippled over the cool ivory keys, the memories of her girlhood, when she was the belle of her circle, roused all her youthful enthusiasm.

After spending an hour or two in this manner she ordered her carriage and drove to her dressmaker's.

At the house where Mrs. Harrison boarded there was, every few weeks, a kind of informal reception, where cards

and conversation, music and dancing formed the order of the evening. Lucy had often been urged to attend, but until now she had felt that she had neither time nor inclination.

The next occasion of the kind the rooms were unusually thronged at an early hour, and it promised to be a very lively, enjoyable affair.

Mrs. Harrison was in high feather, if one may be allowed the expression. She felt that she was looking her best, in dress of garnet silk, with cream lace, garnet drops sparkled in her ears, and a feathery ornament of the same glittered with every movement of her head in the waves of her dark hair.

She was feeling well, too, for she had a new admirer, a wealthy and unmarried man, and notwithstanding she liked well enough to flirt with a married man, yet she had an eye to the main chance, and was on the lookout for an eligible, on whom to bestow her hand and her warmed over affections. Seated in the corner of the *tete-a-tete*, with Mr. Montcalm at her side and Mr. Rivers on the window seat near, she prepared to enter upon an evening of unalloyed pleasure.

But in the midst of their lively chat Mr. Montcalm suddenly exclaimed:

"By George! What a lovely girl!" and looking up they beheld Lucy Rivers entering the room amid a group of young people, her arm linked in that of a laughing girl, whose dark piquant beauty was an excellent foil to her own.

Attired in dress of white *crepe*, with trimmings of pale green ribbon, her beautiful arms and smooth rounded shoulders bare, a spray of white lilies and buds at her breast, she looked as fair, as pure, as Undine rising from the waves.

She saw her husband at the first glance, but she seemed not to see him, and the sight lent nerve and courage and strength, while indignation called a dash of color to her cheek, the only thing needed to add to her beauty.

There was something very interesting going on in that circle, to judge from the animated talk and bursts of laughter, but at length one of them said:

"Play for us, Mrs. Rivers, will you not? Give us some music."

Lucy did not like to play for a large

circle, although a finished performer, for she was too nervous and self-conscious, but this evening she seemed possessed by a spirit not her own, a spirit of recklessness and bravado, the sight of her husband devoted to Mrs. Harrison fired her blood. She went forward to the piano. Dashing off into a brilliant instrumental piece that she had at her finger's end until she had subdued her nervousness and slight embarrassment, then she sang.

She had not a very strong voice; it was a sweet, low, mellow mezzo soprano, with a sympathetic quality in it that went to the heart. She sang that aria from the *Bohemian Girl*:

When other lips and other hearts,
Their tales of love shall tell,
In language whose excess imparts,
The power they feel so well,
There may, perhaps, in such a scene
Some recollection be
Of days that have as happy been,
And you'll remember me.

The crowded room was hushed to silence, but resisting all entreaties to sing again, she arose.

At that moment the sweet witching tones of the violin came from the dining-room, which was cleared for dancing, and Mr. Montcalm sprang up, saying:

"I must have an introduction," and went across the room.

"Whatever brought your wife here to-night?" said Mrs. Harrison crossly.

"I'm sure I don't know," said Rivers, and the pleasure of both was spoiled for the evening.

Mr. Montcalm, after his introduction, eagerly claimed Mrs. River's hand for the first dance, and she entered upon an evening of unwonted gayety. She was young and in her highest spirits, unusually excited by her surroundings, the brilliant scene, the thrilling music, the presence of her husband, and her rival, and her new admirer, all together conspired to make it an occasion of intense excitement.

Once, during the course of the evening, the two rivals clasped hands in the ladies chain in the quadrille in the centre of the room. The contrast was striking. Lucy's fresh girlish beauty contrasted no less with the other's face, faded by years of dissipation, with the scowl of ill humor on it—for nothing angers a complete

women of the world like a successful rival—there did the garish, brilliant colors of her dress, which looked almost tawdry in comparison with the cool subdued neutral tints of the other.

The advantage which Lucy gained that evening she followed up. She went eagerly into society, invited guests to her house, and easily drew around her a circle of young and gay.

It could not be otherwise, she had the advantage of youth and wealth and assured position, and she wrested the sceptre of bellehood so easily from the hands of her rival that it was hardly worth while.

"Mrs. Rivers is an amiable little thing," Mrs. Harrison would say carelessly. "But domestic affairs are her fate. Pity that she is trying to be a gay society butterfly."

Lucy made no remark when she heard this, apparently ignoring her existence.

But to no one was her sudden blooming out into a beauty and a belle, and a leader in society more of a surprise than to her husband.

He did not know how to take it, and when he saw how much she was admired and her society courted, he began to awake to a realization of her value and appreciate her society. Lucy gave him no encouragement, in fact treated him rather cavalierly when sometimes he showed a disposition to enjoy her companionship himself.

"What a fool I have been!" fumed he to himself on such occasions as he contrasted the two women, and began to feel that the position of husband to one whose society was so much sought was not the most enviable in the world.

For Mr. Montcalm made no secret of his open admiration, and a little consciousness on the part of Mr. Rivers kept him silent, he dared not remonstrate for he did not know what retort Lucy might be capable of.

As for Mrs. Harrison, the open desertion of her only eligible suitor, added to the coolness and neglect of Rivers was almost too bitter to endure.

"Never mind, my lady," said she, watching Lucy with darkening eyes. "The position of a successful married belle is a dangerous one, difficult to fill

with assured safety by one as inexperienced as you are. Especially with a lover as ardent and devoted as Montcalm. My eyes are on you, and dare to make one false—one imprudent step and my revenge will come."

"Lucy, stay with me this evening, can you not?" said Mr. Rivers, one evening, after dinner, as he lay on the sofa, while his wife moved around, dressing, preparatory to going out, "my head aches badly, and it has been so long since we have had a quiet evening at home."

Lucy smiled at his sudden fondness for quiet evenings.

"I cannot very conveniently," said she, disentangling the links of a gold chain, "I have an engagement."

"Where are you going? Is it not something that can be postponed?"

"I do not choose to postpone it," said she, carelessly, her heart, that had been momentarily yielding, growing hard again at the thought of a certain evening that she had spent alone, while he hovered at the side of Mrs. Harrison.

"I am going to the theatre with Mr. Montcalm?"

"Ah!" said he. He could not trust himself to say more, but turned his face to the wall, while she went on dressing.

"I am going, Henry," said she, at length, "how do you like my appearance?"

He turned on his elbow, and surveyed her from head to foot.

In sweeping robe of pale blossom colored silk, with opera cloak of white cashmere, lined with satin of the same hue, a bunch of La France roses in her corsage, a fan of white ostrich feathers in her hand, she confronted him with sparkling eyes.

"Mr. Montcalm is to be congratulated," said he, a tone of bitterness in his admiring words.

"Thank you," gathering up her gloves and handkerchief, and leaving the room.

Rivers turned again to the wall, with a smothered curse, as he heard her light steps tripping down stairs.

Not long did he lie there, however, after the street door closed upon the pair.

His head was throbbing, his blood boiling, the indoor air seemed to suffocate him.

He started up and went out, where he

hardly knew, for he was blind with rage and jealousy.

"Henry," whispered the voice of Mrs. Harrison, as he passed—she was waiting for him on the porch—"do you know where your wife is to-night?"

"Yes," said he, steadying his voice with difficulty, "she has gone to the theatre."

"Did she tell you so?" her voice trembled with eagerness and joy; she believed her revenge had come. "She has deceived you; she has gone to the masquerade ball."

"Impossible!" exclaimed he, pausing, leaning against the railing of the porch, trembling.

It was true. After the young people, who composed the theatre party, had gathered, they concluded to go for a short time to the masquerade, before going to the theatre. The only reason Mrs. Harrison had not accompanied them was that she had no escort.

"Let us go, too, Henry," said she, eagerly, "I will prove it to you. Come in. I have two dominoes here. Let us disguise ourselves and go."

The hall of the masquerade ball was crowded, thronged. A whirling mass of gayety and excitement. The moving throng of all sizes and colors, and shapes and costumes, was bewildering to the eye—a perfect kaleidoscope—while the thrilling music sounding through it all, was alike bewildering to the brain.

But the couple they sought were not on the ball-room floor. Rivers was rather silent and absent, a little impatiently listening to the chatter of his companion, who seemed perfectly at her ease—she did not care if this little comedy should turn to a tragedy.

They passed through the ball-room to where a door opened upon a wide, cool porch, lighted with Chinese lanterns, upon which couples were promenading. Mrs. Harrison, with a quick breath, drew her companion behind the shadow of a tall oleander. The ones they sought were walking slowly to and fro, apparently engaged in an absorbingly interesting, confidential conversation.

They knew them by Lucy's pink silk dress, below the sweeping folds of her domino, and Mr. Montcalm by a peculiar

seal ring on the bare, ungloved hand that held his wrap together across his breast.

"Where are our companions?" said the sweet tones of Lucy's voice, slightly anxious and troubled. "Have we lost them in the crowd?" pausing. "Let us find them and return. I am tired of this."

"No! no! Not yet," said the earnest, but slightly agitated voice of Montcalm. "It is early yet. Let me say at last—seize this opportunity of telling you what I have long wished—yet feared to say—how much I admire—how much I prize your society—and ask you—"

"Mr. Montcalm," interrupted Lucy, hurriedly. "Do not go on. Let us find the others, and go. I feel that I should not have come at all."

"Why not? They have already gone, no doubt. If you prized my company as I do yours, you would not care."

"Do not talk so, Mr. Montcalm," her voice trembling with tears. "I hope we are merely friends. Remember, I have a husband."

"A husband!" exclaimed he, with bitter scorn. "He deserves a great deal of consideration at your hands—infatuated with that painted Jezebel of a Mrs. Harrison."

"Take care!" said Lucy, trying to turn it off, playfully. "You were once infatuated as he."

"Not after I had seen you, remember that, Mrs. Rivers!" exclaimed he. "From the time I beheld you, all my devotion has been yours. I have not words to express my opinion of a man, blessed with such a wife as you, who could be attracted by her."

"Mr. Montcalm," said Lucy, after a pause, during which she seemed at a loss to reply to this forcible argument. "Let us drop this conversation. Forgive me. I see that I have been wrong, although I did not intend it. This has been a mere piece of folly on my part, to tease my husband a little for his evident admiration of Mrs. Harrison. I did not intend any harm, nor anything further, but I see now that it has been a thoughtless trifling with your feelings, in a way I had not foreseen. I love my husband, never for a moment has my affection swerved from him. I believe his heart is also mine. I have

full confidence in his principle and affection for me, and notwithstanding his foolish flirtation with another, it is merely, I believe, the pastime of an idle moment. Come, let us go."

When Lucy returned home, she found her husband lying as she had left him. A little compunction touched her heart, she felt that she had acted rather heartlessly in leaving him alone, and ill, while she was in a scene of gayety. After all, she was naturally home-loving and domestic in her tastes, and had been playing a slightly difficult part of late. She dropped down on the floor at the side of the couch, and put her arm over him.

"Henry, said she, softly, her voice trembling slightly, "Are you asleep? Is your head better?"

"You wicked woman!" said he, his voice, and his whole frame trembling with some suppressed emotion, "You told me you were going to the theatre. "You deceived me! You went to the masquerade!" "Why, how do you know?" cried she, convicting herself, in her surprise.

"I was on your track," said he, as he turned and sat up, "I was there myself with that painted Jezebel of a Mrs. Harrison"—his face twitching in his effort to keep his composure.

"Why, Harry, what do you mean?" cried she, astounded.

"I listened. I heard Mr. Montcalm—"

"And as usual, heard no good of yourself," trying to recover herself, and put a stop to his disclosures.

"I heard good of you, my darling!" said he, changing his tone, for he saw that she was agitated almost to tears, putting his arm around her, and drawing her to his heart, where all the conflicting emotions of the evening culminated in a flood of tears, "Do not cry, Lucy, dear," said he, after a pause. "I began to fear I was about to lose your affection, just when I was convinced how little other women are to be compared with you, at least in my estimation. Come, let us make a compact, not to indulge further in this amusement,—it is too trying."

"Agreed!" said Lucy, looking up, through her tears, but she had not been woman, had she not added, "But, remember, you began it!"



A Wheel of Fortune.

BY OLIVIA LOVELL WILSON.

Author of "A Legal Fetter," "A Social Dagger," "Luck of Ashmead," etc., etc.

VIII.

ROBERT FINDS PEACE, DENMEAD MAKES
AND SYLVIA LOSES PEACE.

AS Robert and Sylvia stood thus, hand in hand, there was a slight pause.

Mr. Myddleton's face was grave, but no unkind or harsh thought was reflected in his strongly marked features. Walter Denmead, surprised at this encounter, fell back somewhat, as he was in advance of Mr. Myddleton. He seemed much more agitated than his companion.

Mr. Myddleton laid his hand on his son's shoulder, saying in a low tone:

"My son, I have come to seek you. Forgive the last unkindness between us. Faith has roused and asked for you. You must go to her."

"Father," cried Robert, hardly able to believe these words, "she is no worse, —she is not—dying?"

"She is better than we had reason to hope. This is Miss Wendell, I presume. It is late for you to be here alone, my child. Will you wait a short time until Robert can be once more at liberty to take you home?"

He offered his arm to Sylvia, as he spoke, who was so overcome by the first feminine weakness she had betrayed in friendship for Robert that she reeled and would have fallen had not Walter Denmead been quick to see her condition. She, however, recoiled from his support and leaned on Robert.

"It is only a little faintness. I—I—was startled just now. I can go home—I—must—"

"You must come to the house and rest. You are not well," said Mr. Myddleton kindly. "I feel assured of your interest in Miss Carstone. Pray take my arm."

Appalled at this new sensation of weakness overwhelming her, Sylvia accepted his arm and was thankful for the few steady words spoken to the others as they went to the house. She remembered

afterward Denmead's overcast brow, and the stern curve of his lips. Even now she wondered a little, and thought pitifully of him, if he so loved Faith, and in her first conscious moment heard of her demand for Robert's presence. She was glad for Robert's sake, but something in the strong face of the other touched her.

On reaching the house Mr. Myddleton led the way to a small-room at the end of the hall. A quiet, luxuriously furnished room filled with a soft light falling through opalescent glass.

"Will you wait here a moment, Miss Wendell? Denmead, kindly ring for James and order some wine. I will send my wife, but pardon me now if I go with Robert."

And so saying, Mr. Myddleton followed Robert down the hall. Faith had been carried to the school-room the night of the accident, and remained there since. Lying in an apathetic condition that alarmed the doctors more than acute suffering, she had only once roused to any knowledge of her surroundings.

But to-day, even while Mr. Myddleton so bitterly lamented Robert's wayward conduct; while Robert poured his troubles into Sylvia's ears, Faith opened her brown eyes, and lay wistfully gazing at old Diadema Grey, who had come in this hour of trial to the aid of her old mistress.

"I—want Mrs. Myddleton," said Faith, faintly, and when she saw Robert's mother bending over her, Faith smiled wistfully and said:

"Will Robert come to-night?"

"Robert, my dear?"

"Yes; I hope he will come back. I made him angry. I cannot remember well now, my head seems so heavy, but I will see him to-night? He will come!"

"Yes, my dear. Can you remember no more that has happened?"

"Not now; I am very tired; but—I—want—Robert. You will tell him?"

Mrs. Myddleton left the room, and old Diadema followed her into the hall.

"Go, my child," she said solemnly, as she looked into the mother's face, "go call Robert; the lad is sick at heart, and obedience to you will not cure him of what he suffers. Tell your husband I say 'a man's pride shall bring him low, but honor shall uphold the humble in spirit.'"

"Oh, Di, do not think it is pride that makes Guy harsh in this matter. He has tried so hard——"

"Aye, I know it; but there will always come a time when our seeming wisdom fails. It is clear to me Mr. Myddleton is flying in the face of Providence just now. That poor lamb is not long for this world, and Robert can alone make her happy. For her sake I am glad he is not back in Williamstown."

The mother only clasped her hands over her eyes a moment, in prayer for strength to meet her husband with this message, then she went to him, and he read in her glance her sorrowful relinquishment of the son she loved so dearly.

"We must leave him with God, now, Guy," she said, gently, "it must be right, since the Father wills this sorrow for us and for him."

When Robert came to the door of the room he paused, finding his mother near in the hall. He looked from her to his father, a sudden helpless expression crossing his youthful face.

"Mother," he said, "how am I to enter this room? I am resolved, and it is not in obedience to yours or my father's wishes. You must know this."

"We only wish for your happiness, my son. She has asked for you; go to her."

His father wrung his hand as he spoke, and Robert felt the tears on his mother's face, as he bent to kiss her, and then he felt that she watched with such eyes, as he entered and knelt by the couch of the injured girl. He knew his father turned abruptly away, but with what storm of regret and despair in his heart Robert Myddleton would never fathom. To Guy Myddleton every hope he had held for his son seemed crushed. No strong-willed man is willing to let another be taught through the lessons he has suffered. Perhaps it is a generous blessing as well as the curse of a strong will that it tries

to do God's work in its own way. For when the awakening comes it seldom finds the error has carried one beyond His care.

The room in which Robert knelt was full of dusky shadows, but the girl's wan smile brightened all the gloom for him.

"Robert, you are not angry with me now?"

"No, my darling."

"I am glad. I am *so* tired, Robert; how long have I been ill? Will you some day lift me in your strong arms, and carry me out where I can hear the birds? Everything is so quiet here."

"Faith, dear love," he said brokenly, kissing her hands, lifted weakly to meet his.

"Dear Robert, I *am* so happy," she said, and as he bent his head to kiss her, she put her arms about his neck, clasping her hands in a loving yoke. A yoke never to be lifted until death set its seal upon her pale lips and the sight of her suffering should quench the youth in his face and heart.

No wonder the mother, stealing quietly away, found it hard to say, "Thy will be done."

* * * * *

When Mr. Myddleton left Sylvia and Denmead alone, there was a painful silence between them.

Sylvia sank into the nearest chair, ashamed of her weak limbs, and still more mortified to see her dew-wet dress and feet.

For a moment she had a wild idea of rushing away, but the memory of her weakness in the garden checked the folly of such a resolve.

She also remembered she had eaten little dinner and no supper. Nature was taking her revenge. The room began to go around once more; Denmead seemed to have acquired three heads, and the pictures on the wall bowed in an absurd manner. She turned all her faculties toward resisting the abominable weakness of fainting.

Meanwhile Walter Denmead was undergoing a bitter experience. The termination of this ill-advised love of Robert Myddleton for his sister was like a stab of the heart to him. He saw all it entailed, and the man who proclaimed all men

equal, felt more keenly than the father and mother that Faith Carstone even without the crippled body was no mate for Robert Myddleton. His grief was so mingled with pride and anger that he must struggle, not as Guy Myddleton with his thwarted will and pride alone, but with every tenet of his so-called peace. He could not be angry with the helpless girl, yet for this dread accident to have befallen her, the sacrifice seemed appalling to Denmead, and he could see in it none of the light of Heaven Mrs. Myddleton bade him find.

His had been a faith built on another philosophy, and not the pearl of great price that every man must forfeit all else to obtain. Walter Denmead had yet much of the dross of error and arrogance to barter before he found the simple pearl of truth. But he suffered now in seeing only a blurred vision of what had been so clear a short time ago.

Sylvia, now frightened at the darkness coming upon her sight, rose and tried to reach him as he stood across the room.

"I—am sorry to trouble you," she said catching at a chair back, "but I—*must* have—some water!"

Denmead was at her side in a moment; he placed her in a chair and rang the bell, watching her anxiously and reproaching himself for his neglect. There was something very touching in the white, sweet face of the girl as she lay back upon the dark plush chair. Denmead felt a tacit rebuke for his careless guardianship in every curve of the slender drooping form, from the soft golden curls against her white throat to the little feet drenched with dew. He was anxious at once to make amends for his lack of chivalry.

Sylvia felt the water held to her lips and a light touch bathe her temples.

"If you will lie down on the sofa, Miss Wendell, your head should be lower," she heard finally in a pleasant voice.

"No—I am better. I must not stay here—I—"

"You must remain and take the wine I have ordered for you. Mr. Myddleton will reproach me should I totally neglect to care for you."

"But I have so—far to go, and—it is late. I must go—at once."

She rose unsteadily. Another moment in the presence of those brown eyes would madden her.

"It is growing late. If you insist upon returning I will accompany you."

"Oh, no—no," she said with a decided gesture of distaste.

He turned away, and stood at a little distance. Sylvia sat upright watching him nervously. At no time in her life had she ever felt other than a companionable friendliness toward all men. Brought up among her father's friends she had been used to every phrase of the masculine character. But she had not treated Walter Denmead in the same frank manner that made her charming to others. She had scorned and denied him what she readily bestowed upon Edward Bowman, Junior Bolter and Robert Myddleton. She had told Mr. Halsted she "hated him."

Now as he turned silently away, she began to think she feared him. She sat white and miserable, when James came in with a tray upon which was placed a glass of wine and some dainty biscuits.

Denmead gravely inclined his head toward Sylvia, and James passed the tray to her. Sylvia endeavored to taste the wine and biscuit, but something hard in her throat rose up against it. Struggling madly against being overtaken by a more foolish emotion than fainting, she pushed it aside, saying:

"I cannot, indeed; I cannot drink it."

Denmead came over to her.

"I feared to ask you to take this wine myself. I seem unfortunately to so often incur your displeasure. But for your own sake I ask you to try and drink it. I am afraid you will never forget what passed to-day, and that you dislike me."

Sylvia fingered the stem of the wine-glass.

"I—do not dislike you, Mr. Denmead. I—do not know you well enough—to—to *dislike* you."

"Your emphasis will bear many interpretations, yet every moment in your presence you make me feel your contempt."

"I was not conscious—I did not realize—" began Sylvia

"You denied ever having met me, to day, at Mr. Marchant's, when I had ac

knowledge by my face the memory of that brief glimpse of you. If I judge aright, it was hardly in keeping with your character to come so near a falsehood."

The color rushed to Sylvia's face. This was a restorative stronger than wine. Perhaps Denmead understood it; if so, the day of reckoning was not far distant, since when we fathom another's sensitiveness, we are pretty sure to furnish our neighbor with a handle for our own.

"I was not only false to you, but to myself. I must seem very wicked and ungrateful."

She put the wine glass on a little table close at hand, and gazed into the amber liquor, biting her lip.

"No, but an incomprehensible young woman," returned Denmead, not slow to see his advantage. "I am conscious you have much to forgive me in finding I am the other heir to this estate. But, believe me, I am entirely out of your way."

"Do not let us talk of that," she said. "I do not dislike you. I mean, I—think the reason I have always treated you this way is—because—I may as well confess," raising her eyes with an effort to meet his, "I have always been seen by you in a wrong light."

"You, Miss Wendell?"

"Yes," catching her breath almost with a sob. "I am not happy in Avon. I have done things I should have scorned to do, had my father lived to protect me. I—I—want to get away—from my uncle and guardian. When I first heard of you—"

"Miss Wendell, I beg you will not pain yourself further. I am sure I understand something of your sad life."

"Do not misunderstand me," she said, blushing again painfully. "I—did—not mean—to complain. But you *never* will *know* me because—"

She hesitated.

"Well?" he said.

"Because," she said desperately, "I really care that you should *respect* me."

"And do you doubt my respect for you?"

"You cannot, when you know I prevaricated in your presence to-day; and then you—found—me with Robert. Oh, Mr. Denmead, I was the one that coaxed Rob to take me to the Fair. Had I stayed

home Miss Carstone would not have been hurt. Do not speak! I have thought it over and over. I am a very unhappy girl."

"Miss Wendell, believe me, you take a morbid view of all that has transpired. You naturally have felt an antagonism toward me, and you owe me no gratitude for saving you a wound the day of the Fair. I should have rescued anyone else as readily. Your presence there was chance, and I will not have you blame yourself for Faith's injuries. Heaven knows, enough is at stake now without involving another in endless reproach. I want you to forget that I ever placed you in the embarrassing position of to-day, which I would gladly have spared myself and you; and try and remember that I feel none of the unkindness you have attributed to me."

He spoke so earnestly that Sylvia could admit no doubt of his sincerity. She gave him a swift, grateful glance. "And won't you—in turn—try and—forget my rudeness to you?"

"Gladly. And we are friends?"

"I—think so."

"I want you to be quite sure," he said, smiling. "And there is one way in which you can show your acceptance of my friendly overtures."

"You make conditions, then, when I am the one supposed to grant grace," she replied, with a sly return to her old spirit of independence.

"My conditions are very simple, two in number. You will let me see you safe home—"

"Oh!" began Sylvia, then checking herself looked at him expectantly.

"And my first condition depends entirely upon your ability to perform the second. You must drink that wine."

Sylvia lifted the glass, set it down again, then looked at him, the smile growing from her lovely eyes to her lips. Then she lifted the glass again and drank its contents.

"Thank you," said Denmead, heartily.

Mrs. Myddleton now entered the room, and Sylvia's embarrassment was but short-lived under the influence of her gentle presence. She heard Sylvia's apologies as if she had conferred a favor by her presence at Greytower, and was so kind

as to permit the girl to have her will about returning home at once. She only detained her long enough to have a dainty cup of tea served in the little room, and Sylvia felt in a seventh Heaven of delight as she watched the lovely sad-eyed hostess pour the tea into the dainty cups, and enjoyed the little pleasant talk that passed between herself and Denmead. Sylvia forgot her wet feet and tumbled hair, and was hardly glad to whisper her grateful thanks and good-night to Mrs. Myddleton. Nor could she guess how as the mother and wife kissed her kindly, and reminded her of her good office in recalling her son, the day of Faith's sad hurt; that her heart was heavy with the knowledge that on the grave of their first-born her husband was striving to stifle the sorrow and disappointment for his second son. But Florence Myddleton had seen her husband go forth, and felt he would return at peace with God, no matter how severe the struggle.

Once out in the cool air and the clear moonlight, a silence fell between Denmead and Sylvia, until Sylvia said abruptly:

"She is the loveliest woman I ever knew."

"Mrs. Myddleton? She is a rarely beautiful character. No one can be near her without feeling better for the companionship. Will you take advice from a new acquaintance?"

"I am glad you think me worth it,"—(very humbly.)

"Will you not take my arm? It is rather rough walking here. I was going to say that if I were in your place I would make a staunch friend of Mrs. Myddleton. She will never desert a friend; she is constancy itself."

"But I am so different. I am so foolish. I do such imprudent—indeed, you do not know me."

"You are very young," he said.

"I am nineteen years old," she said, eagerly.

"Indeed! So old as that?"—(in an amused tone.) "Such indiscretion in one so old is *almost* unpardonable."

"You are laughing at me."

"That should convince you, I think, the less of your shortcomings. When Mrs. Myddleton was nineteen she had been married two years. And the second

year of her married life she left her husband and eldest son, taking one of the most imprudent steps of a life time."

"She left—Mr. Myddleton?"

"Yes, and her babe. She was young, and they quarreled, and she went away never to return."

"You knew her then?"

"Hardly. But my mother told me the story. In a few months the little boy sickened and died, and she, the young heart-broken mother, came back penitent, and almost crazed with grief."

"I had heard," said Sylvia, in a low tone, "but I did not believe it. I've seen the little grave-stone in the church yard, and the window at St. Andrew's, in memoriam. Why do you tell *me* this?"

"To show you that Mrs. Myddleton is capable of the sincerest of all sympathies, a heart that knoweth its own bitterness."

"Why do you care to be so kind to me?" she asked, after a pause, and the question set Walter's thoughts in quite a new direction, and fortunately she continued without waiting for reply, "I seem to have shown you the worst part of myself. This afternoon, when I seemed so avaricious and dishonest, I was just like Uncle Uriah, and to-night, still so silly and vacillating"

"I do not like to hear you condemn yourself."

"But I want to tell you, since you have been so frank with me," she said eagerly. They had reached the gate of the Maythorne farm, and Sylvia turned to look at him. In the East the beautiful moon was mellow and clear, casting its rays full upon Denmead's face."

"I think you knew Miss Carstone before she was hurt. They tell me she is *very poor*, I thought *once* they said she had a brother, but it must have been a mistake, for she worked in a shop in New York, before she came here."

"Yes?" Sylvia was too earnest to catch the hard constrained tone of his voice.

"I will tell you what has been my great desire in attaining this fortune, I want to help—oh! so many people. You are a man, so strong and able to make money, but you cannot *think* how important one is without money. If I should have this fortune, I want to give a great part of it to Miss Carstone, that she

may never have a desire ungratified. And perhaps—*perhaps*, when she is better she will come to me at Rose Lynn and be my sister. I am so *lonely*, Mr. Denmead, and I *want* so much. I will confess, I long for the comfort of my old life, and some one to love and care for. *You* know Faith Carstone, do you think she would ever love me?"

How blind she was to the coldness of Mr. Denmead's face. It was the quick flush of anger in his eye that startled her.

"You talk of impossibilities, Miss Wendell. It is a romantic idea, and does credit to your benevolence. But—had it come from any one else, I should deem it an insult!"

"What do you mean? What have I said?" cried Sylvia, bewildered.

"You have a strange mode of reasoning. You claim the whole estate in order to dole out charity to my sister."

"What do you mean?" she cried, in a sharp tone of anxiety.

"That nothing would induce Faith Carstone to accept your bounty. You are strangely obtuse, but I will ex-

plain. As Miss Carstone's brother, I will never *permit* her to accept a penny of the money *you* claim as an inheritance."

"You—you are *her* brother," gasped Sylvia, "but—the name?"

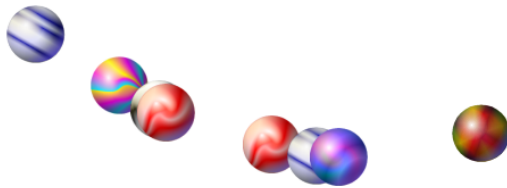
"I am the half brother of Faith Carstone; I thought you knew it."

"Oh, no—no."

"Then I am very sorry for you. Good-bye, Miss Wendell. I leave Avon to-morrow."

He lifted his hat, but Sylvia did not raise her head. She stood, her arm across the bar of the gate, and rested her forehead against it, shutting out the beautiful moonlit landscape and his vanishing form. Her arm slid from the gate presently and she lay on the wet grass, until a warm touch upon her cheek roused her. It was Peter's tongue, as he whined and lapped her face in canine fondness. Denmead looked back once, and saw the slender white form in the moonlight, and paused irresolutely. Then setting his teeth in sudden rage strode on over the fields.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)



Major Hawkins's Regiment.

BY BELLE C. GREENE.

I'VE noticed that men folks are dreadful apt tew git out o' kilter once in a while (in their healths, I mean). It was so with my husband, Major Hawkins, anyway, when he got settled agin in Punkinville.

As sure as business slacked up a little he'd begin tew complain o' not feelin' well. Sometimes it was one thing, sometimes another, but one spring he got the idee intew his head that he was dispeptick. He wa'n't, he was as hearty as a bear, but I had tew yumor him, all the same, and putter and fuss over him 'cordin'ly.

I cooked all sorts o' sickly dishes—oatmeal and rolled oats and cracked wheat—wall, every kind of a *mush* you could name, and then we tackled the coffy. He thought as he was bilyus he must dew somethin' about his coffy, you know. He was awful fond o' coffy, and I don't think he had any notion o' really givin' on't up, but we begun by performin' all the different operations on to it. We powdered it, and filtered it; got some coffy o' the male sect, and tried that, and finally resorted tew subterfuges, and made coffy out o' everything in nater' but coffy. We tried barley, dandyion and brown bread, then he drunk coco', a spell, then shells, and at last hit on "Mooney's Extrack"—you've all heard on't—and that seemed tew come the nighest to fillin' the bill of anything yet. That is, he liked it the best—seemed tew get 'tached tew it, so to speak, right off. But one mornin' I happened tew taste on't, and I see in a minute jest how it was! I set down the tumbler and looked at Hannibal, and, says I pretty severe, I tell ye:

"Most as good's whiskey, ain't it?—and your wife a member o' the 'W. C. T. U!'" Husband I'm ashamed on ye!"

"Hang it!" says he dretful sheepish, "what shall I drink? Hain't we tried everything, everything but plain water. You wouldn't condem' me tew plain water, would ye?"

"Drink anything that ain't a deceit and a snare!" says I. "None o' them other things hurt ye, nor the coffy nuther, and if you wa'n't a gump and a fool you'd know it!" says I.

"Then why didn't ye say so, before this time," he asks, grumpy.

"Cos you wouldn't be satisfied till you'd fugled and fussed jest so much, and I knew it," says I.

Wall, next mornin' he went back to the coffy, common coffy, common gender and all, but he couldn't give up his favorite idee o' bein' bilyus, and he got intew the habit o' lookin' at his tongue forty times a day. No matter what he was dewin', readin', carpenterin', or what, (for he was kinder repairin' and dewin' odd jobs round the house, seein' business at the mill was slack), he'd leave off, drop everything all of a suddin, and go to the lookin' glass, run out his tongue as fur as he could, stan' and look at it a spell, then shake his head and sigh doleful, with sech an expression o' low sperits and misery on his countenants, as made me and darter Car'line feel dismal, tew.

He was the queerest person about takin' medicine that I ever see. The doctor left him a bottle o' stuff and told him tew take a teaspoonful three times a day, but he seemed tew arger if a small dose would help him, a big dose would do him good in perportion. So he'd take a double dose reg'lar, and every few minutes all day long, he'd go to the cubbard and take a swaller or tew, besides. It was a wonder it didn't kill him? It would, if it had been anything stronger'n merlasses'n water. But it didn't kill him, and it didn't cure him, nuther, and he continnered tew lay round the house and show all the symptims o' hypo for a couple o' weeks, and bimeby he begun tew talk about sellin' the mill and settlin' up his worldly affairs. Then I felt worried in arnest. For though I was morilly sartin that nothin' ailded him—his health, I mean—I knew he could die of oddity, if he so detarmined, and I was at my wit's end to know what tew dew. Finally, I concluded tew go to the doctor and consult with him myself. I goes tew him and I says:

"Doctor, Major Hawkins ain't sick, and you know it as well as I dew, but somethin's got tew be done. He's got tew have his fill o' dosin' and nussin'. That's

what he's started in for, and that's what he will have. Now, if he should be told tew dew some dretful hard, disagreeable thing, plenty of 'em, and systimatic, he'd think he was better, right away, and he would be, in consequents. Doctor," sez I, "what say tew puttin' him through a reg'lar course o' treatment?"

The old doctor, he laughed, but finally 'greed tew it, and we laid our heads ter-gether and concocted up what the doctor called a "*regimunt*," a sort of a program it 'peared tew be, and it was labored and complicated enough tew suit old Cap'n Na'mun, himself, that the Bible tells about, you know. Yes, I hain't a doubt but what Hannibal's "*regimunt*" would a suited Na'mun to a T. I tell ye, men want a fuss made over 'em when they're sick, or when they think they be, which amounts tew the same thing.

Here's the "*regimunt*." We writ it all out on a big sheet o' paper.

"1. Immejitly on risin' in the mornin,' a cold shower-bath, plenty o' water, follored by vigorous use o' the flesh brush. After the bath, a hossback ride of not less than two mil'ds.

"(N. B.—I orter say, perhaps, that Hannibal ain't very active naterally, and hates onnecessary exercise like pizen.)

"2. Breakfast of oatmeal and stewed cramb'ries, and a cup o' sage tea.

"(Before the doctor perscribed on the dinner, he asked me if there was any vittles the patient despised particklar, and I mentioned a few.)

"3. Dinner: Stewed beans or biled cod-fish. No meat allowed.

"4. After dinner a nap of not less than one hour.

"(You see, we knew well enough that he wouldn't go tew sleep nice and comfortable, but prob'ly put in his time thrashin' round and thinkin' over what a mean dinner he'd had.)

"5. Supper: Cold bread and some more cramb'ries. (He despised cramb'ries.)

"6. After supper a walk of not less than one mil.

"7. A cold shower-bath before retirin'.

"8. After each meal, and on goin' tew bed, a tumbler full of thorowart tea and a liver pill, large size."

There was a lot more, but these was the main orders.

When I onrolled the paper and showed it to Hannibal, and told him sollum, that them ere was the docter's strick orders, he seemed mitily pleased.

"That looks sunthin' like," sez he, "Why we haint never really *done* nuthin' before; never really tackled the diseze, as you might say."

"Wall, we'll tackle it now," sez I.

"Yes," he continnered, "I've been satisfied in my own mind for a good while that if I wanted tew live, I'd got tew work fer it, and work hard."

"Wall, Hannibal," sez I, pintin' ter the "*regimunt*," "here's work enough, and hard work."

Tew cut a long story short, he tended right tew hissself and obeyed them orders, —*fer jest three days*—and it cured him. That is, he was so much sicker of the treatment than he was of the diseze, that it amounted to a cure, practically speakin'.

The evenin' of the fourth day, when it come 'long time fer him to take his walk, he begun tew hang round me and 'pear uncommon affectionate. Finally he sez kinder coaxin':

"Ruth Ann, don't you want'er go tew walk with me tew night? Dew; I feel as if I should like your comp'ny," says he.

"I'm much obleeged tew ye, Hannibal, I'm sure," I answers, real amiable, "but much as I should enjoy tew go, I don't see how I can. There's the cloe's tew sprinkle and the bread tew set, and besides, I really don't feel tew need the exercise."

He hove a turrible sigh and started off alone. When he come back he began hangin' 'round agin, and when the clock struck nine he looks up and says:

"I've a good min' not tew take that ere blarsted shower-bath tew-night. I'll drink the yerb tea and take the pill, but I haint much 'pinion o' shower-baths, anyways, Ruth Ann?"

He looked at me awful questionin', but I kep' still, and didn't open my head. He waited a minit for me tew speak, then he says right out:

"What do you think, Ruth Ann?"

"I think," I answers, impressive, "that if I was you I should continner the '*regimunt*,' unabridged, till I was cured,—if it killed me!"

He didn't seem tew see nothin' out o' reason in my remark, but took it dis-

couragin' like, and his countenants fell. He was mad, tew.

"You would, would ye?" he snaps, sour's vinegar.

"Yes, in my 'pinion, when you feel that your disease is cured, then is the time tew give up the treatment, not before!" I sez, firm as a rock.

He didn't say no more, but *he didn't take the shower-bath.*

The next mornin' he got up and went out tew the barn and done his chores, and come back whis'lin' as gay as a young boy. It did my heart good tew hear him. I was jest gittin' out the spider tew fry the ham and eggs for my breakfast and Car'line's. When I got 'em on the stove a dewin' he come and stood beside on me, with his hands under his coat-tails,

and looked at 'em awful longin'. They did look good, that's a fact, and they smelt good, too.

"Ruth Ann," sez he tew me, "put in another egg or tew. I'm goin' tew try and eat what the rest o' the family dew. I'm feelin' fust rate this mornin'. That "*regimunt*" has fetched me right up. It beats all, don't it?"

"Yes, it doos," says I, tickled enough tew dance a hornpipe right there; for I knew he was cured! And the best of it was he stayed cured. Whatever else he's had for odd streaks sence, he haint never had no more dispepsy tew this day.

But I put the "*regimunt*" away careful, where I could clap my hand on tew it any time in case o' need.

